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Delegates to American Legion Boys Nation and American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation walk to the Capitol on July 27 to meet with their senators and legislative staff. Read more on Page 63. Photo by Lucas Carter

The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 13,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



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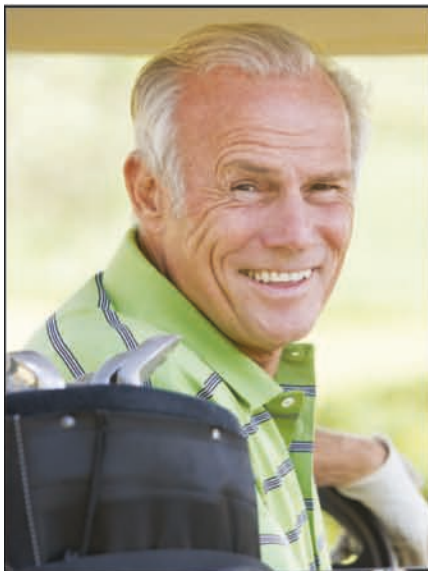
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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

'World Builders'

I just read the article by Douglas Wissing (August) on the Army Corps of Engineers, and was impressed. I was in the "Red Horse" Air Force squadron in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970. I have a great appreciation for the amount of work military construction organizations can do in adverse conditions in a short time. It brought back memories.

— Ronald Barber, Glen Gardner, N.J.

I was a heavy equipment operator, running a 290M scraper. We built the road from the Tuy Hoa bridge to the bottom of Vung Ro Mountain – about 15 miles long. I'd like to thank the South Korean army for its protection.

— Orland H. Pilon, Riverside, Calif.

Our country is proud of all the Army Corps of Engineers' accomplishments. Perhaps a future issue could feature the Navy Seabees, whose motto is "We Build – We Fight."

When the Korean War began, I volunteered and became part of Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 4. The Seabees receive Marine training, and have built bases and other projects that have been a valuable asset to our country. At this time, my outfit is still active and serving.

— Albert Schollenberger,
Egg Harbor City, N.J.

The article by Douglas Wissing is very good, but he muddles the origin of the U.S. Military Academy relative to the Army Corps of Engineers. Congress authorized the establishment of a "Corps of Artillerists and Engineers" at West Point, N.Y., an Army fortification established during the Revolutionary War. The academy evolved from the training of soldiers in military engineering skills there.

President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation establishing a "Corps of Engineers" stationed at West Point in 1802. The U.S. Military Academy was also established at West Point in 1802 under the authority of the Corps of Engineers.

The academy initially languished through a period of lax standards and discipline, poor organization and a variable curriculum. Upon his

appointment as superintendent in 1817, Corps of Engineers Col. Sylvanus Thayer upgraded academic standards and improved discipline, making civil engineering the foundation of the curriculum. The U.S. Military Academy was the nation's first engineering college and remained subordinate to the Corps until 1866, at which time it was transferred to the direct authority of the secretary of war.

For years the academy's top-ranking graduates were assigned to the Corps upon commissioning. Robert E. Lee (Class of 1829) and Douglas MacArthur (Class of 1903) are prime examples of this policy. Graduating cadets of lower academic rank were assigned to other branches of the Army.

The Corps of Engineers has, from its beginning, two primary functions: military and civil works. Lt. Lee superintended the construction of Fort Pulaski near Savannah, Ga., and a river flow diversion project at St. Louis. On the military side, 2nd Lt. MacArthur was a platoon leader in an engineer unit in the Philippines after his graduation. Career and reserve Corps officers continue to have intermittent civil-works assignments.

Wissing could also have mentioned the Panama Canal in his reference to significant Corps accomplishments.

— J. Dale West, Longview, Texas

Note from a Boys State alum

A relative brought to my attention the mention of Boys State by George Blume (I Am The American Legion, August).

I was the only representative from Peoria, Ill., at the state's first Boys State. In the second year there were more than 20 of us from Peoria. We campaigned hard, and I was elected governor. In both years, I was sponsored by the Peoria Legion post. At the Illinois American Legion convention in Danville that year, I spoke to the members, and throughout the year I gave numerous speeches about the values learned at Boys State.

I am 98 now, and am so pleased to learn that the Legion is still involved in teaching how our government works.

— August Grebe, Upland, Calif.

Paris climate pact

I read with interest the article on climate change (Big Issues, August). This is becoming a nonpartisan issue. The Defense Department knows climate change is real, and it has been planning for years how to counter its effects. Recently 46 Republicans joined with all the Democrats to defeat an amendment on a defense bill that would have blocked further study of the effect of climate change on national security. Many are members of the growing Climate Solutions Caucus, which consists of 52 members – 26 Republicans and 26 Democrats. They study what the United States can do to address this global problem. America is first in many areas and should be first in finding solutions to climate change. I applaud DoD for its strong leadership role.

— Larry Kramer, San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

If the United States was to fulfill its obligations under the Paris Agreement and all other signatories were to do the same, scientists think global warming would be reduced by only 0.4 degrees Fahrenheit. By anyone's guess it would cost us at least a trillion dollars to meet those obligations – money better spent on education, infrastructure and improvements in health care.

— Donald Woolery, Rockford, Ill.

World War I letters

The letters from the Great War (Rapid Fire, August) are a welcome sight, because it is a forgotten war. My dad and three uncles served in World War I, and never talked about it. One uncle had horrible scars on his arms and legs from mustard gas, and I was too nervous to ask him questions about something that seemed so obvious – namely, that he had lived through hell.

In 1993 I watched my dad, as a member of the Legion, recite “In Flanders Fields” at a Memorial Day ceremony in Phoenix. I saw Great War veterans struggle to their feet, even from their wheelchairs, to stand at attention for their fallen comrades. It was a very touching sight.

I urge the Legion to continue these articles and, if a plaque with “In Flanders Fields” is not planned for the World War I memorial being built, to push for it. It's not the Argonne, but those words are what my dad and his generation took to their graves as what best represents their sacrifice and that of their fallen comrades.

— Thomas W. Vogel, Fresno, Calif.

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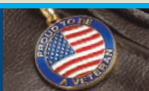


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JOSEPH SCHRAM

"We don't just sit behind a table and wait for them to come to us. We get up front and talk to them. Once you start talking, you bring in The American Legion and what we do – pretty soon you get them as a member."



Photo by Clay Lommeth

Read an extended version of this profile and watch a video interview with Joseph Schram:

 www.legion.org/magazine

Five years ago, Joseph Schram was one of two veterans who belonged to Flanders Field American Legion Post BE-02 in Belgium. Today, post membership exceeds 100 thanks to initiatives that connect the fallen heroes of World War I to the children of active-duty U.S. personnel and veterans serving today at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) and NATO.

Post BE-02 Commander Schram has recruited members and worked to revitalize and charter posts elsewhere in Europe. He helped rev up a Legion Riders chapter and an adopt-a-grave program at the World War I cemetery that is Post BE-02's namesake.

The Flanders Field American Cemetery in Waregem, Belgium, is the final resting place of 368 U.S. World War I heroes. The names of another 43 are etched into the wall of the missing. Just as the post was getting ready to launch the grave-adoption program, then-President Barack Obama spoke at the cemetery. "It brought the cemetery to light within two months, every grave and name on the wall of the missing were adopted. By associating this adoption program with The American Legion, we're branding The American Legion."

The adopt-a-grave program, oratorical competition, Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State help the post build awareness and membership. "It's getting bigger and bigger," he says of the youth outreach effort at NATO and SHAPE. "As we grow, and as the community understands what we can do, we are working more with the Junior ROTC and hopefully will be more involved with their junior shooting program."

As the Legion's centennial draws nearer, Schram and the department look forward to extending the organization's message in France, where the Legion was founded in March 1919.

"As we start advertising through the different commands, through the embassies, the different VIPs in Europe – they're going to say, 'American Legion? Wow.' People are going to take notice."

– Jeff Stoffer

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POST Flanders Field Post BE-02

YEARS IN THE LEGION 5

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- Department vice commander at large (2016-2017)
- Post commander (2012-present)
- Post service officer
- Gold Brigade Recruiter

See an archive of past interviews:

 www.legion.org/iamlegion

AMERICA REMEMBERS PRESENTS

The Vietnam Veterans Tribute Thompson

HONORING ALL THOSE WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

Our men and women came from all over the country, from all walks of life, to fight for freedom on the other side of the world. They served with honor, dignity, and courage. All gave some, some gave all, and many are still missing and unaccounted for. As a nation, we owe all of our Vietnam Veterans a debt that can never be repaid.

Nothing about the Vietnam War was easy. Those who were there remember the swampy grasslands, rice paddies, dense jungles, the heat and an elusive enemy; a war that took place halfway around the world in a country divided by decades of bitter history.

Few generations faced a more daunting challenge than those who fought in Southeast Asia. Few generations are more deserving of our gratitude and respect. To honor all those who served in Vietnam, America Remembers presents the **Vietnam Veterans Tribute Thompson**. Craftsmen commissioned specifically for this project by America Remembers decorate each Thompson in elegant 24-karat gold artwork on a mirror-polished nickel-decorated receiver. Issued in an exclusive limited edition of only 1,000 Tributes, this handsome firearm captures the courage and sacrifice of all those who fought for freedom in Vietnam.

The Tribute is a working semi-automatic Thompson submachine gun in caliber .45 ACP, one of the most memorable American infantry weapons of all time. Like many dedicated Americans, the Thompson served proudly in Vietnam. We've taken this combat-tested classic and transformed it into a work of art. The result is a stunning presentation firearm that will stand as a testament and lasting Tribute to all Vietnam veterans.

The Thompson: An American Original

Vietnam was considered the "last great war" for the Tommy Gun. Though it saw less use than in previous wars, it was a popular weapon for American and South Vietnamese soldiers. The Thompson was a "warhorse" which was relied on for its superior stopping power and dependability.

Like the dedicated American warriors who served in Vietnam, the Thompson served proudly in Vietnam, continuing a tradition of excellence first established during WWII, and later in Korea. This stunning presentation firearm is a lasting tribute to all of America's veterans and links them forever in time with their brothers-in-arms who fought earlier wars.

We know there will never be another American-made firearm like the Thompson submachine gun.

And there will never be more dedicated men and women than those who bravely served their country in Vietnam.

Much like the generations of warriors who came before, those who served with valor in Vietnam deserve their place in American history.

They didn't hesitate to put their lives on the line and give up everything in defense of our liberty and freedom. Some made the ultimate sacrifice. Others returned home to a divided nation. All of them deserve our gratitude.

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▼ Both sides of the receiver feature emblems that honor Vietnam War veterans. The banner reads: "A Grateful Nation Remembers," and inside the oval is a lone American soldier, the distinctive silhouette of Vietnam and a pair of U.S. military helicopters. The emblem on the right side is framed with a banner reading: "Vietnam Veterans Tribute Thompson".

▼ Left side of the receiver features a soldier with his M60 machine gun-nicknamed "The Pig" for its hefty size. The M60 unleashed a fury of firepower on the enemy. Also featured is a M48-A3 Patton tank providing cover as troops enter a village. The M48 was a workhorse during the Vietnam War.

▲ Right side also features a soldier scanning the distance for enemy movement. A pair of M48 tanks make their way on the ground while the sky is abuzz with helicopters, which played such an important role during the Vietnam War. On the far end of the receiver, you'll find a Marine and his M16. Along with the Huey, the legendary M16 has become a symbol of combat service in Vietnam. Introduced to the battlefield in 1964, the M16 was a lightweight assault rifle that proved invaluable in jungle firefights. Right side features an image of the iconic Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal presented by Republic of Vietnam to members of the United States military who completed at least six months of duty in the war, with a frame reading: "Vietnam War - All Gave Some, Some Gave All." Below it you'll find a banner that reads: "Lest We Forget."

©AHL, Inc.

MODEL: Thompson Semi-Automatic Submachine Gun

CALIBER: .45 ACP

EDITION LIMIT: 1,000

I wish to reserve ____ of the "**Vietnam Veterans Tribute Thompson**", a working Thompson semi-automatic submachine gun, at the current issue price of \$2,995.* My deposit of \$195 per Tribute is enclosed. I wish to pay the balance at the rate of \$100 per month, no interest or carrying charges. Certificate of Authenticity included. Thirty day return privilege.

*All orders are subject to acceptance and credit verification prior to shipment. Shipping and handling will be added to each order. Virginia residents please add sales tax.

☐ Check enclosed for \$ _____.

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Defund immigrant sanctuary cities



SUPPORT

Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va.

■ Goodlatte is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.



OPPOSE

Rep. Mike Quigley, D-Ill.

■ Quigley is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations.

Sanctuary cities needlessly jeopardize innocent lives. By refusing to allow their law-enforcement officers to voluntarily cooperate with federal immigration-enforcement authorities, sanctuary policies allow unlawful and criminal immigrants to be released onto the streets. We are all too familiar with how these dangerous policies have devastated families across the United States.

In one tragic instance, Kate Steinle was killed in San Francisco after local authorities released an unlawful immigrant who had been deported five times and had multiple felony convictions.

To address the problem of sanctuary cities and enhance public safety, I introduced the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act in June, and the House approved it. The bill strengthens federal immigration-enforcement officers' ability to pick up criminal aliens from local jails and withholds certain federal grants from sanctuary cities. Importantly, the bill allows crime victims to sue sanctuary cities that release criminal aliens onto the streets who then commit crimes.

The No Sanctuary for Criminals Act also contains Sarah and Grant's Law, to ensure that unlawful immigrants convicted of drunken driving or arrested for other dangerous crimes are detained during their removal proceedings. In January 2016, an unlawful immigrant driving drunk struck Sarah Root's car and killed her. And in January 2015, Grant Ronnebeck was murdered at a convenience store by a convicted felon who was free on bond while facing deportation.

We have much work to do to improve our nation's immigration laws, but the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act is a good first step.

Sadly, the conversation about immigration has shifted to scapegoating immigrants to fuel our deepest fears and anxieties on crime. The latest strategy is to attack law-abiding immigrants by targeting the very cities that welcome them as

productive members of their communities. Maligning "sanctuary cities" as hotbeds for crime is factually incorrect, not to mention xenophobic and discriminatory.

That's why I was so disappointed when

the House passed the deceptively named No Sanctuary for Criminals Act, which attempts to withhold federal funding from jurisdictions that do not comply with certain immigration enforcement requests. It stands to damage civil liberties rather than safeguard them.

The evidence is clear: immigrants, both legal and undocumented, commit less crime than the rest of the general population. According to the Pew Research Center, the CATO Institute and other researchers, immigrants are significantly less likely than native-born Americans to commit violent crimes. Furthermore, a recent analysis of FBI data shows that crime rates in sanctuary cities are considerably lower than their non-sanctuary counterparts.

Targeting sanctuary cities can also inhibit crime reduction by eroding goodwill between immigrant communities and local law enforcement. Due to fear of retaliation or deportation, immigrants often fear working with police to report crimes or assist with investigations.

If we truly want to address immigration in this country, we have to put aside the hyperbolic, destructive rhetoric and implement common-sense reforms supported by the majority of Americans.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

The No Sanctuary for Criminals Act withholds certain federal funds from cities and states that do not cooperate with immigration officials or enforce laws.

Critics of the bill say sanctuary cities encourage immigrants to work with police.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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Heart beats

It's been said that music is good for the soul. German scientists have tested whether it's good for the heart as well. Their answer: it depends on what kind of music.

Researchers at Ruhr University played Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, classical waltzes by Johann Strauss and disco-pop songs by ABBA for 60 subjects, and monitored their blood pressure before and after the experiment. As the *Telegraph* reports, "They found that Mozart lowered systolic blood pressure (the pressure in blood vessels when the heart beats) by 4.7 mm Hg and Strauss by 3.7 mm Hg, but the Swedish pop group made no significant difference. Diastolic blood pressure (when the heart rests between beats) also fell by 2.1 mm Hg for Mozart and 2.9 mm Hg for Strauss."

In response to the non-effect of ABBA's music, lead researcher Hans-Joachim Trappe speculated that "the use of spoken words may have a negative role."



Photo by Mark Solarski

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.



What you need to know about cholesterol

BY MICHELLE GIBEAULT TRAUB

If you are confused by cholesterol, you are not alone. According to a recent survey by the American Heart Association, the types of cholesterol and the best ways to achieve healthy levels are a mystery for many. Given that high cholesterol is a risk factor of cardiovascular disease – the most common cause of death in the United States – it is important we understand this puzzling substance.

For starters, even though we tend to view cholesterol as a villain, it plays an important role in health. Made naturally by the liver, cholesterol serves as an essential part of cell membranes and hormones used throughout the body. It only becomes a risk to the cardiovascular system when levels in the blood are out of balance.

The first step in managing cholesterol is the easiest: having your levels checked. Through a

simple blood test, you can monitor the key components of your blood including total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and triglycerides. The terms "bad cholesterol" (LDL) and "good cholesterol" (HDL) refer to the roles these substances play in the bloodstream. One way to remember the difference is that HDL is the "happy" form, helping remove cholesterol from blood vessel walls. In contrast, LDL is the "lousy" form because it can leave deposits in the arteries that can form blockages and over time lead to a heart attack or stroke.

While genetics is sometimes a factor in high cholesterol levels, with some individuals naturally producing more LDL, lifestyle factors are common contributors to elevated risk. This means we all have power in affecting our cholesterol levels and decreasing risks with the choices we make

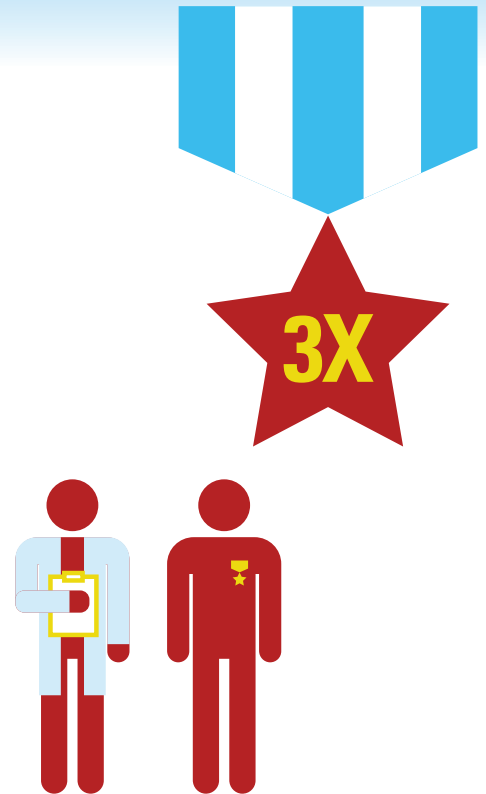
See **CHOLESTEROL** on page 14

Chronic hepatitis C

is impacting our veterans...

Veterans are 3X as likely to be infected with chronic hepatitis C vs the general population.

- Veterans may be at an increased risk of having chronic hepatitis C due in part to blood exposure in combat.
- A number of veterans infected with the hepatitis C virus **remain undiagnosed**.
- Most veterans with chronic hepatitis C were likely infected during the Vietnam War Era.
- Many people with hepatitis C don't have symptoms or even know they are infected.



Veterans should consult with a healthcare provider to learn more about their personal risk factors, screening, and treatment for chronic hepatitis C.

For more info, please visit:
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs • www.va.gov
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention • www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/



More Americans suffer from mental illness

A study of federal health data conducted by researchers with NYU Langone Medical Center reveals that 8.3 million American adults – 3.4 percent of the population – suffer from “serious psychological distress,” HealthDay reports. This marks a significant increase from previous estimates, which placed the percentage at less than 3 percent.

Lead researcher Judith Weissman attributes the increase to the aftereffects of the Great Recession, which began almost a decade ago.

“The recession seemed to have pushed the mentally ill to a point where they never recovered,” she says. “This is a very disturbing finding because of the implications of what mental illness can do to a person in terms of their ability to function and their life span.”

Equally worrisome, the researchers found that “between 2006 and 2014, access to health-care services deteriorated for people with serious psychological distress, compared to people without emotional distress,” HealthDay adds. “Nearly one in 10 distressed Americans in 2014 did not have health insurance that would give them access to a psychiatrist or mental health counselor.” Plus, about 10 percent of people with serious psychological distress could not afford to pay for their psychiatric care in 2014, up from just under 9 percent in 2006.

For assistance with mental health issues, visit **mentalhealth.gov/talk/index.html**.

CHOLESTEROL *continued from page 12*

every day. Four important activities include maintaining a normal weight, participating in regular exercise, making healthy food choices, and avoiding smoking and air pollution.

A healthy weight is important not only for cholesterol levels but also for a variety of other health concerns, including high blood pressure, diabetes, some cancers, joint pain and more. The body mass index (BMI) is one way to determine your healthy weight. There are BMI calculators online, or you can calculate it yourself by dividing your weight in pounds by height in inches squared, then multiplying by 703. A healthy BMI falls within the range of 18.5 to 24.9.

Participating in physical activity daily is an important part of maintaining or achieving a healthy weight, while also improving cholesterol levels. Individuals should aim for 30 minutes of exercise daily through walking, running, biking, lifting weights or another form of movement. If this seems daunting, remember that every little bit helps, and even small amounts of weight loss (between 5 to 10 percent of body weight) have a positive effect on health. Always be sure to consult with your physician to determine what level of activity is safest for you.

One of the most powerful tools in lowering cholesterol is through the foods and drinks you choose. The healthiest diet is high in plant-based foods that are natural, unprocessed and low in sugar and salt. In addition, a variety of dietary components have proven to benefit cholesterol levels, including increasing omega-3 fatty acids, adding healthful spices like garlic and aged garlic extract, and consuming soluble fiber in foods like oat bran, beans and ground flaxseeds. Antioxidant-rich foods like brightly colored vegetables, berries, cocoa powder, green tea, coffee and red wine have also proven to be helpful in managing cholesterol levels and maintaining overall heart health.

If you are still seeking more answers on cholesterol and heart health, the American Heart Association’s website, **www.heart.org**, has a variety of tools and resources. In addition, always discuss your cholesterol concerns with your physician. He or she can guide you to the best solutions based on your individual risk.

Michelle Gibeault Traub is a dietitian and health writer based in Connecticut.

GENERAL RECOMMENDED CHOLESTEROL LEVELS*

■ Total cholesterol

Less than 200 mg/dL

■ LDL (Lousy) cholesterol

Less than 100 mg/dL

■ HDL (Happy) cholesterol

Greater than 60 mg/dL

*Recommended levels vary according to age and risk factor

Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid

Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has shaken up the hearing aid industry with his new line of medical-grade, affordable hearing aids. *These revolutionary hearing aids are designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.*

“Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry” — Dr. Babu,

Board-Certified ENT Physician

Dr. Cherukuri knew untreated hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer’s disease. **He didn’t know why hearing aids were so expensive when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones, and digital cameras had fallen.**

Since Medicare and most private insurance plans do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which can cost between \$2,000-\$6,000 for a pair, many of the doctor’s patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri’s goal was to find a solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, similar to the “one-size-fits-most” reading glasses available at drug stores. He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, those were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and were not effective amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

Inspiration from a Surprising Source

The doctor’s inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a cell phone

he had just purchased. “I felt that if someone could devise a smart phone for about \$700 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at an affordable price.”

Affordable Hearing Aid Superb Performance

The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop medical-grade hearing aids without sacrificing the quality of components.

The result - MDHearingAid®
saving you up to 90%

Our line of hearing aids declared to be the best low-cost hearing aids that amplify the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.

Tested by Leading Doctors and Audiologists

The MDHearingAid® line of aids were rigorously tested by leading ENT physicians and audiologists who unanimously agree that the **sound quality and output in many cases exceeds more expensive hearing aids.**



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TRIAL



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from Domestic & Imported Components



MDHearingAid®

This product is not intended to diagnose or cure any medical condition. If symptoms persist, see your doctor. Not available in the state of Washington.

- **Designed by a Board-Certified Ear, Nose, & Throat (ENT) Doctor**
- **Doctor-Recommended, Audiologist-Tested**
- **★★★★★ Top Rated Hearing Aid Online**
— **250,000 Satisfied Customers**
- **Batteries Included! Comes Ready To Use**
- **FDA-Registered**
- **Save Up To 90%**
- **Free Shipping Available**
- **100% Money-Back Guarantee**



Doctors and patients agree:

“BEST QUALITY SOUND” “LOWEST AFFORDABLE PRICE”

“I have been wearing hearing aids for over 25 years and these are the best behind-the-ear aids I have tried. Their sound quality rivals that of my \$3,500 custom pair of Phonak® Xtra digital ITE.”

—Gerald L.

“I have a \$2,000 ReSound® Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid® in the right ear.

I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids.

—Dr. May, ENT Physician

“They work so great, my mother says she hasn’t heard this well in years, even with her \$2,000 digital! It was so great to see the joy on her face. She is 90 years young again.”

—Al P.

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Extreme Adventures

Add an adrenaline rush to your next vacation.

Incredible Adventures

BY LYN METTLER

If another trip to the beach sounds like a total yawn, perhaps you need to inject some excitement into your next vacation. From skydiving Everest to swimming with sharks to zip lining the Las Vegas Strip, consider an “extreme” travel experience.

WEIGHTLESS Experience the thrill of zero gravity with ZERO-G, the first and only FAA-approved provider of commercial weightless flights for the general public that are not simulated. Available in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Orlando, Fla., San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C., passengers board a Boeing-727 to experience the same level of weightlessness they’d feel on the moon and Mars. Book online using the promo code **MILITARY2017** and bring your military ID on the day of the flight for a 15 percent discount. gozerog.com

HALO JUMPING How does a two-minute free fall from 30,000 feet sound? Experience this adrenaline rush as part of Incredible Adventures’ tandem High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) Parachute Adventure in Tennessee or Mississippi. You will be provided with oxygen to keep you from losing consciousness, which happens after about 30 seconds. Skydiving experience is not required, though you must weigh less than 225 pounds, not have had surgery within the past 18 months and not have donated blood within the past month.

If you want to kick your jumping up a notch, try the ultimate skydive over Mount Everest. Incredible Adventures takes groups of up to 15 to Nepal to free fall over some of the world’s highest mountain peaks, landing at the highest drop zone in the world. Military and veterans discounts vary by adventure. incredible-adventures.com

■ For its sixth year, San Diego will celebrate **Kids Free October**, when kids are admitted free or enjoy savings at more than 100 area attractions, hotels and restaurants throughout the month. Kids get in free at key attractions like the San Diego Zoo, SeaWorld San Diego and San Diego Sailing Tours. A complete list is available at sandiego.org/kidsfree.

■ TripAdvisor recently selected its **Best Amusement Parks in the World**, with Universal’s Islands of Adventure in Orlando taking the top spot, followed by Discovery Cove in Orlando, Europa-Park in Germany, Disney’s Magic Kingdom in Orlando and Universal Studios Hollywood in Los Angeles. Other U.S. parks making the Top 20 included Dollywood, Silver Dollar City and Busch Gardens Tampa.



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*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to bradfordexchange.com/use-tax.

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*Plus a total of \$9.98 shipping and service per pendant (see bradfordexchange.com). Please allow 4-6 weeks after initial payment for shipment of your jewelry. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

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BIKE DOWN PIKES PEAK After enjoying views of five states from the top of Colorado's famous Pikes Peak, which you can reach by the Cog Railway, bike more than 14,000 feet down the mountain. Along the way you'll pass through five different zones, each with a different climate, vegetation and wildlife. The descent takes about two-and-a-half to three hours, during which you'll see eagles, deer, elk, Rocky Mountain Big Horn sheep, black bears, marmots and an occasional mountain lion. Rent bikes from Challenge Unlimited, which offers a \$2 discount for active or disabled military with ID. 🌐 bikithikit.com

If you have any energy left, consider hiking the nearby Manitou Incline, a favorite of Olympians training in Colorado Springs and a former railroad track whose 2,000-plus steps take you up 2,000 feet in elevation. Hiking the incline is free.

SWIM WITH SHARKS Did you know that San Francisco has a population of great white sharks and that you can swim with them just 29 miles from the city? From late September through November, when the sharks are hunting in the area, you can cage dive to observe their behavior in the wild with Great White Adventures. During a one-day cage dive, you will likely get to do three or more three-minute dives in a cage that holds up to four divers. You can also observe from the surface. A one-day dive is \$775 per person, though military and veterans receive a \$200 discount. 🌐 greatwhiteadventures.com

WHITEWATER RAFTING With Three Rivers Whitewater Rafting in West Forks, Maine, you can navigate challenging Class IV rapids on the Penobscot River and add a tandem skydiving jump from 11,000 feet. You'll complete the skydive first and then hop in a raft for a thrilling trip down the rapids. Three Rivers offers a 10 percent military and veterans discount. 🌐 threeriverswhitewater.com

ZIP THE STRIP See the Las Vegas Strip as you zip line 400 feet in the air between the Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino's towers. On your 10-second flight aboard the Voodoo Zip Line, which leaves from atop the 50-story Masquerade Tower, you'll get 360-degree views of Vegas as you fly 800 feet at speeds of up to 33 miles per hour on your way to the Ipanema Tower. The zip line can hold two people. Discounts of 10 percent are available for military and veterans with valid ID. 🌐 voodoozipline.com

Lyn Mettler is a freelance travel writer who blogs at GoToTravelGal.com.



Photo courtesy Elizabeth Flores/Star Tribune

■ **Team River Runner**, which has chapters in more than 30 states, provides weekly paddling sessions to wounded and disabled war veterans designed to promote camaraderie, help them embrace new challenges and strengthen leadership skills. Visit TeamRiverRunner.org to learn more.

America's peak leaf-peeping

Great Smoky Mountains (early October to early November, depending on elevation)

The show starts at higher elevations first, with the lower elevations the last to hold their color. Look for the yellow birch, American beech, mountain maple, hobblebush and pin cherry, as well as the sugar maple, scarlet oak, sweetgum, red maple and the hickories.

Blue Ridge Parkway (October)

Most trees along the parkway turn during the month of October, beginning with higher elevations and progressing down the mountains to lower elevations.

New Hampshire (early end of September to October, especially in the White Mountains)

Pennsylvania (late September through early November)

This state has one of the longest and most varied display of leaves.

Colorado (mid-September to mid-October)

The glorious display of the golden aspens shimmering in the wind typically begins in the middle of September and runs into October. Great places to view the scenery include Aspen, Vail and Telluride. Keep in mind, however, that trees could peak early depending on temperature and high winds. In Denver, the best time for the color show is October to mid-November.

Sonoma County & Napa Valley, Calif. (late September through Thanksgiving)

The grape vines turn beautiful shades of red and orange during harvest season. Try a ride with Sonoma on a Bike to spot the colors throughout Wine Country.

■ Considering signing up for a [Sam's Club membership](#)? Earn a minimum 1,500 American Airlines AAdvantage miles when you sign up through American's eShopping Mall. Miles can be used for free flights.

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GI Bill reforms to benefit thousands

BY TOM PHILPOTT

President Trump signed the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act in August to correct inequities of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and to boost or restore its benefits for thousands of veterans, dependents and survivors. Those set to gain from the new law include:

■ **Tens of thousands of Post-9/11 GI Bill users who enrolled in for-profit colleges** such as ITT Technical Institute and Corinthian Colleges, only to see them close, depleting their benefits. These veterans will have benefits restored for credits that can't be transferred to accredited programs. Congress previously granted such relief to Pell Grant recipients and other federal aid students.

This makes GI Bill users whole too, said Rep. Phil Roe, House Veterans' Affairs Committee chairman.

■ **About 6,000 reserve and Guard members since 2012 who were activated under "12304b orders,"** which, due to a poorly written earlier law, failed to qualify them for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. These orders allow service secretaries to use reserve forces without an emergency call-up by the president or secretary of defense. Benefits will be awarded to this entire population retroactively.

■ **About 1,500 Purple Heart recipients** who suffered wounds that shortened active-duty tours, who have also been left unqualified for full GI Bill benefits. They will be provided 100 percent GI Bill eligibility back to Sept. 11, 2001, if they served at least 30 days on active duty and were discharged for service-connected disabilities. VA must implement the change by August 2018.

■ **Survivors of fallen servicemembers**, who are eligible for Marine Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry Scholarships under the Post-9/11 GI Bill but are excluded from its Yellow Ribbon feature, which allows coverage of full tuition costs at private colleges. This is to take effect by August 2018.

■ **Veterans enrolled in five-year science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) degree programs** would see GI Bill benefits boosted by nine months to a total of 45. Total spending on enhanced STEM benefits will be capped at \$100 million annually.

■ **Future generations of student veterans will have a "Forever GI Bill."** Military members who earn GI Bill benefits and separate or retire on or after Jan. 1, 2013, will have the rest of their lives to use these benefits, versus the current window of 15 years after discharge. This doesn't apply to those who left service before 2013.

Another provision authorizes additional GI Bill benefits for members of the National Guard and reserves. After initial training, those who serve at least 90 days on active duty, but less than six months, would receive 50 percent rather than 40 percent of GI Bill benefits. Those who serve at least six months but less than 12 on

active duty would get 60 percent rather than 50 percent of the benefits now payable.

When adhering to their budget rules, lawmakers must pay for expanding entitlements by making cuts in other entitlement or mandatory spending accounts. For this law, veterans affairs committees and veterans service organizations (VSOs) agreed that the \$3.4 billion cost of its GI Bill fixes and enhancements over 10 years could be offset by narrowing inflation protection for the GI Bill's living stipend paid monthly.

The stipend is to equal the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) payable locally to married enlisted members in pay grade E-5. But two years ago, the military and Congress decided to save defense dollars by stifling inflation protection for housing allowances by a percentage point a year over five years. The GI Bill stipend was not affected similarly. With the new law, the monthly stipend will begin to reflect the dampened BAH rates used by the military.

The veterans affairs committees worked for months on the law's hefty mix of GI Bill reforms, guided by a "tiger team" of VSOs that included The American Legion. They reviewed separate bills from individual lawmakers, accepting a package of 17 with 28 provisions to improve VA education benefits.

Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for nearly 40 years.





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Madam **COMMANDER**



Denise Rohan of Wisconsin takes on The American Legion's highest office.

BY MATT GRILLS

Denise Rohan is the first woman to be national commander of The American Legion.

She's proud of that distinction. She knows it's a milestone for the organization and female veterans in general. Just don't tell her, "It's about time!"

From Rohan's perspective, women have always been leaders in the Legion. "If you look back, women were post commanders early on," she says. "We've been in leadership positions. If we weren't leading from the front, we were still there, helping the organization along.

"I don't think of myself as a female Legionnaire. I want to be known as a great American Legion leader who happens to be a woman. I've been working hard for the Legion for more than 30 years, and am humbled it chose me to be national commander. It's an honor."

Elected at the Legion's 99th National Convention in Reno, Nev., in August, Rohan is an Army veteran and the second national commander from Wisconsin. She and her husband, Mike, belong to Mason Lindsay Post 385 in Verona, where they moved after nearly 30 years in Sun Prairie.

"They fit in right away," says Stan Hook, post commander. "They didn't sit back and watch things happen. They hit the ground running."

Members have supported Rohan for a long time and are excited to see her at the top, Hook adds. "She's very capable. She's outgoing, friendly and can bring people together in a consensus. She's done a lot for this post and she'll do a lot for the national organization."

SECOND FAMILY Rohan grew up in Elkader, Iowa, a small town on the Turkey River. At age 5 or 6, she was waking up and leaving notes that said, "Gone fishing."

Her parents, Joe and Dorothy Hulbert, set a strong example for their three daughters. Both were volunteer EMTs and active in the local United Church of Christ; Joe was Elkader's volunteer fire chief. "They served the community and taught us to serve our community too," Rohan says. "They were supportive of whatever we wanted to do."

She first encountered the Legion as a girl, at Memorial Day services in a Catholic cemetery near her house. She'd wait patiently to receive a spent brass shell casing from the honor guard, to use as a whistle.

"The town always had a parade that started at the cemetery, came down the hill, went across the bridge and ended up at another cemetery on the other side of the river," she says. "There was only one parade I remember going the other way, when they brought home the body of someone killed in Vietnam. It began at the high school and went up the hill. That memory stayed with me."

Still, the idea of serving in the military herself didn't occur to her until a high school friend asked Rohan and another girl to accompany her to Des Moines for an Army physical. Her friend failed, they passed, and Rohan had a choice. Unsure what she wanted to do with her life, and reluctant to ask her parents to put a third child through college, she joined under the buddy system in 1974.

For a person who struggled with homesickness, Fort McClellan, Ala., took some getting used to.

"Somehow my mother lived through me sobbing on the phone every single call for a couple of weeks," Rohan says. "Then I started realizing that I had another family: the women in basic training with me. They had my back, they made sure I was taken care of, and we became sisters."



FAR LEFT: Denise Rohan is The American Legion's first female national commander and the second from the Badger State.

Photo by Clay Lomneth

LEFT: Rohan joined the Army with a friend, Diane, in 1974. She served as an instructor in the Quartermaster Corps at Fort Lee, Va.

Photo courtesy Denise Rohan



Denise and Mike Rohan wed while stationed at Fort Lee, Va., in the 1970s. They are Army veterans and members of Mason Lindsay Post 385 in Verona, Wis. Photo by Clay Lommeth



At Fort Lee, Va., she completed quartermaster school and was the outstanding graduate of her class. Needing female instructors, the Army sent Rohan to more training. That's where she met Mike, who was working as a television production specialist.

"I had to have some time in the studio," she says, teasing him. "My roommate at the time was a runner-up for Miss West Virginia the year before she joined the Army, so here's this beautiful blonde who probably did really good on camera because she was used to that kind of stuff. He doesn't remember meeting me that day."

By Mike's recollection, they met through a mutual friend a couple of months later. He soon realized this girl had all the qualities his mother told him to seek in a woman – and more.

"She never once told me to look for someone who could shoot an M16 or crawl under barbed wire with live fire going on or run two miles with a ruck sack on her back, but that's what I found," he says. "Denise has all those abilities of a soldier but is also a loving wife and mother."

They started dating, fell in love and ... Mike got orders to go to Korea. About the same time, Rohan was up for re-enlistment. Wanting to stay together, they were married by a justice of the peace during one of Rohan's morning breaks. Their reception was at a McDonald's.

"That's our romantic place we go every year, on May 21," she says.

'WOMEN ARE VETERANS TOO' In the end, the Army couldn't guarantee Rohan an assignment overseas, so she left the service and became an Army wife. Over the next few years, the couple lived in Korea, Texas and, finally, Wisconsin. Mike spent the first half of his career as enlisted, then became a warrant officer in the National Guard.

Meanwhile, Rohan built her own career at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, starting as a program assistant in the student loans office. She eventually rose to the position of assistant bursar, managing a \$120 million loan portfolio and helping to develop a computerized system to manage it all. She retired in 2012, after 29 years.

"We miss her a lot," says Regina Derlein, who worked under Rohan as a financial specialist. "She is someone we always went to for answers. Always up on all the federal and institutional regulations. When she left, she took a wealth of knowledge."

Rohan's American Legion career has had a similar trajectory. She joined in 1984, when the new commander of Post 333 in Sun Prairie – a friend of Mike's – recruited her to join so she could serve as adjutant. She laughs when she recalls an older veteran who was flustered by a woman's presence at meetings. "He was saying something and swore, and then he took his cap off and said, 'I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be disrespectful.' Later he did it again and said, 'I just don't know how I'm going to do this.' I told him, 'Hey, I was in the Army too. I've heard those words before.'"

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Rohan plays with granddaughter Isla, 3, and grandson Sawyer, 7, in her Verona, Wis., home. Photo by Clay Lomneth



Where Rohan really found her spot in the Sun Prairie post was coordinating community blood drives – four a year for two decades. “Each pint of blood can help three people, and we collected hundreds at each drive,” she says. “The volunteers kept coming back, the donors kept coming back. It makes you feel like you’re making a difference.”

From there, Rohan’s reputation for hard work and willingness to serve opened door after door: post commander, district adjutant and commander, department historian (she’s a four-time winner of the National American Legion Historian Contest), department commander. On the national level, she is a former chairman of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission, as well as the National Membership & Post Activities Committee. Along the way, she’s volunteered for dozens of smaller jobs that have cemented the Legion’s place in her community, like chartering a Boy Scout troop, organizing children’s Christmas parties and assembling troop care packages.

None of it would have happened if Rohan was the sort to hold grudges. When the couple lived in Marshall, Wis., briefly, a member of the local American Legion came by to recruit Mike. Rohan identified herself as an eligible veteran, but the Legion recruiter told her that women join the Auxiliary only. Years later, the Marshall post realized its mistake and hung a photo of Rohan – then district commander – beneath a sign that says, “Remember, women are veterans too!”

Today that post is one of her biggest supporters. “I promised they’d get one of my first national commander photos to put in that frame,” she says.

‘WE CAN DO THAT’ Rohan’s name is known in more than just Legion circles. At the Wisconsin Army National Guard Armory in Madison, she and her husband are Aunt Denise and Uncle Mike. Since 2006, they’ve frequented drill weekends so often that young servicemembers sometimes assume they’re part of their unit.

Facing a rough situation with a soldier fresh off deployment, and needing resources fast, Staff Sgt. Dan Killam was told to talk to the Rohans at the Legion. That call led to an unbelievable amount of care for troops and their families, he says.

When soldiers needed satellite phone minutes to call home after a battle, the Wisconsin Legion Family raised \$50,000. At a spur run for the 105th Cavalry, Legionnaires fed nearly 500 people in 20 minutes. At various dine-outs, they’ve covered the cost of dinner for re-enlisting soldiers. All these things happened because of the Rohans.

“If Denise says, ‘We can do that,’ something makes everybody say, ‘It’s going to be OK,’” Killam says. “People who pray that something works out in the end are essentially praying that Denise shows up.”

He tells a story about a soldier whose roommate killed himself in their house. He couldn’t afford to have it cleaned. Within a day, Killam received a check from a Vietnam War veteran eager to help.

“There is no program that provides for that, but there is a number in my phone,” he says. “The Rohans are the tightest safety net we’ve ever seen. I would do anything for them, and I believe they would do anything for me, if for no other reason than I am a soldier with a family.”

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Capt. Brandy Pate and Staff Sgt. Dan Killam talk with Rohan at the Wisconsin Army National Guard Armory in Madison on May 22. Photo by Clay Lonneth

Whether it's the military, the Legion or one's relatives, Rohan believes in strengthening the bonds people share. Her theme as commander – in fact, her motto in life – is “Family First.”

She's thought about it a lot after a particularly difficult year. While decorating a tree in her backyard, she fell off a ladder and broke both feet. Not long after, her son Nick had life-threatening complications following surgery and was in the hospital for weeks. What kept her going was prayer and encouragement from her Legion family.

It reminds Rohan why she's devoted much of her life to the organization: camaraderie, belonging, mutual helpfulness. “Each and every Legionnaire should take time to remember why they joined in the first place, and why they continue to belong,” she says. “If we're ready with the answers to those questions when we ask others to join, we'll grow.”

Keeping members is just as important to Rohan. She hates hearing of people leaving the Legion because something upset them at their post or they didn't see the point of membership.

“That just seems really sad to me,” she says. “We're family, and somebody left our family. We need to go after them and bring them back, even if that's a post in the next city or other part of town.”

That's Rohan's message for all veterans, women and men. “If you go into a Legion post and you don't feel like it's a fit, go to another post and find the fit. Give us another chance. There's a family out there for you someplace.” 🍷

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.

Top Ten Things You Don't Know About **Denise Rohan**

10. One of her favorite activities is making “potions” with her grandchildren, Sawyer and Isla. Sometimes they'll combine drink mixes to see how they taste together; other times they'll try to create small explosions.

9. She wears a past post commander ring that belonged to Bobbe Stuvengen, a past national historian for the Legion and one of Rohan's mentors.

8. While stationed at Fort Lee, Va., she did a lot of sewing, repairing uniforms for a first sergeant's Civil War re-enactments on a nearby battlefield.

7. “I'm not sure how people in Wisconsin are going to feel about this, but I'm not a cheese eater.”

6. As a child, she dreamed of one day owning a pet shop.

5. No one in her family will watch it with her, but she's a fan of “Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter.” “Everybody just laughs at me. It's a good movie!”

4. When she joined the Army she was interested in becoming a chaplain's assistant, but there were no openings.

3. She's diligent about writing cards and thank-you letters, usually in the car on the way to her next stop. “Everybody gets a thank-you note,” Mike says. “I drive her somewhere, I get a thank-you note. And she doesn't put it on my desk. She mails it to me.”

2. As second vice commander, she increased attendance at post meetings by offering meals. “If you want Legionnaires to show up for something, you feed them.”

1. When the Legion's Department of Wisconsin endorsed her as a candidate for national commander, the first congratulations note she received was from Keith Kreul, the state's only other national commander (1983-1984). “That meant the world to me.”

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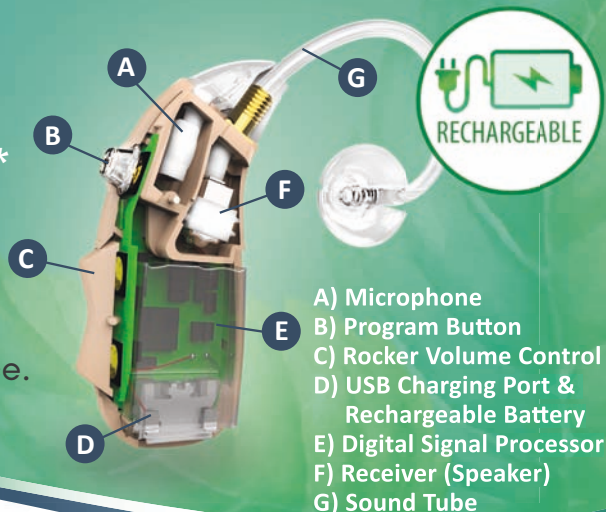
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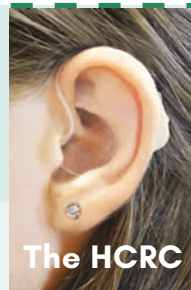
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MENTORS ON THE DIAMOND

With the Legion's support, the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team shows children who are missing limbs what they are capable of achieving.

BY STEVE B. BROOKS

AN IED EXPLOSION cost Army Sgt. Brent Nadjadi, 22, his left leg in Afghanistan in 2010. Leaving the military three years later left the veteran without something else: a sense of belonging.

"When you go back to the civilian sector, nothing's the same," Nadjadi says. "It's hard to relate (there), especially when I was the only amputee in my area in rural New York."

Nadjadi joined American Legion Post 173 in Bath, N.Y., where he found friends and mentors. "These guys have been through a lot of the same things we've been through, and they're able to speak firsthand to it," he says. "They took me in."

Still, he felt incomplete. Before joining the Army, Nadjadi had a strong love for baseball. After his amputation, he longed to get back on the diamond. He made it his goal to "better myself physically and mentally."

He's doing that now as part of the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST). Based out of northern Virginia, the team is made up of

veterans and active-duty military who have lost limbs. They travel the country playing (and usually defeating) able-bodied teams in celebrity, exhibition and competitive softball games.

It's hard to spot WWAST's weaknesses. They field the ball with precision, round the bases with speed and can jack the ball out of the park in a matter of seconds. It's a highly competitive level of softball – and was just what Nadjadi needed.

"It's great being able to play around like-minded people who look, act (and) feel the same way you do," he says. "You get that camaraderie stuff with it. You had it in the military, it's gone, and now it's back. It's been an incredible experience."

While WWAST's players get a lot out of being part of a team, they also give back. Since 2013, they've hosted an annual Kids Camp for children ages 8 to 12 who have amputations or missing limbs. The team covers all the expenses for children and a parent to attend; priority is given to military families.





The Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST) hosts a summer camp for children ages 8 to 12 with amputations or missing limbs. Photo by Lucas Carter



LEFT: Sons of The American Legion member Dennis “Bucky” Weaver has coached WWAST since 2014. After spending time with the players, “I realized their hunger to get back into playing sports,” he says. **RIGHT:** Adults and children gather for a final huddle following the softball game that concludes camp. Photos by Lucas Carter

During this past summer’s camp at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., children spent a week working softball drills with WWAST players. It culminated with campers splitting into two groups and playing a game in front of family and fans at the GMU softball field.

Children learn physical skills at the camp, but the week offers much more than learning to hit, field and throw. Eleven-year-old Jake, the son of an Army veteran named Christopher, lost his right leg in a car accident a few years ago. He also suffered a depressed skull fracture, and at one point his parents were told Jake would be a vegetable for the rest of his life. He had to relearn everything, Christopher says.

“I’m probably speaking for most parents who have a kid missing an arm or a leg, or both,” he adds. “They lament that there’s nowhere they can go and put their child into another group of kids without their child standing out. And how much their child stands out defines a spectrum, but it’s a spectrum of bad

“What this camp offers is a social normal. A lot of the parents I’ve met hail from places where their child is the only one in that community or within a 100-mile radius who has just one hand or just one leg. They come here and it’s a mind-opening experience because they see not just the dynamics of the new social normal ... we see young adults who have already walked through the fire that our children are walking through now and are doing it successfully.”

As for Jake, he says he’ll remember the WWAST

camp for “a long time,” and that for him the highlights were “meeting all the new kids, with prosthetics ... and meeting the new counselors who were wounded warriors who know how much work goes into this thing.”

Thanks to a family connection, the WWAST camp has a strong relationship with The American Legion – specifically, Post 177 in Fairfax, which provides meals, financial contributions and other support. Post 177 conducts the camp’s opening ceremony, while post service officer Brad Watkins arranged for local transportation for this year’s campers. Post 176 in nearby Springfield also provided a meal.

“When the kids come in, they lack self-confidence and lack ability,” Watkins says. “They’ve been made fun of. A lot of times they’ve never associated with anybody else with an amputation. So for them to have this kind of experience, and for these guys to pay that stuff forward, not to mention the patriotism that goes with it – we’re doing the Pledge of Allegiance, we’re tying in The American Legion, the 17th District color guard does flag presentations for the game. All that stuff, it’s what the Legion does. We take care of each other and we pay it forward.”

The team’s family connection to the Legion is coach Dennis “Bucky” Weaver, who has headed WWAST since 2014. A member of Post 177’s Sons of The American Legion squadron – and son of a World War II veteran and 50-year member of the post – he applauds the Legion’s support of the team at the camp and on the road.

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“The American Legion’s support over the past six years has been incredible, especially here at 177,” Weaver says. “Every time we’ve come in the area, they’ve opened this place up and fed us and taken care of us. And we when travel, the same thing. All the posts around the country, we’ll stop in for dinner. The Legion Riders, the Auxiliary, the Sons – everybody has been so supportive of us. I can’t thank them enough.”

He adds, “The Legion was such a big part of my life growing up. I played baseball here for Post 177. It’s amazing how they’ve opened up to me. Every time I come back they want to know how the team’s doing.”

Weaver originally planned on being with the team for a year, but that changed when he spent time with the players. “I realized their hunger to get back into playing sports ... (it) really appealed to me. I looked at myself and said, ‘You need to help these guys.’ So I stuck with it.

“When we first started, a lot of these guys had issues. They had PTSD. (They had a) distrust in their prosthetics. A lot of these guys, when we first started, were just out of Walter Reed ... I see a change in them mentally and physically. I think a lot of it has to do with camaraderie. Getting back with more people who are soldiers. I think that’s something they really missed when they left the military.”

Nadjadi has found those relationships with WWAST, as has Frank Wasson, a member of Post 136 in Salem, Ore., and Army veteran who lost his left leg in a rocket-propelled grenade attack in Afghanistan in 2010. He enjoys seeing campers grow in their confidence and skill during their week with the team.

“You’ll have kids missing legs and they’ll come in pants,” Wasson says. “The (missing) arm kids will be in long shirts. Slowly, through the practices and the days, they’ll start shedding down to tank tops (and) T-shirts. You start seeing these small groups form. They actually start having friends themselves. And what’s funny is you see the parents forming small groups and transferring information among themselves.”

One parent at this year’s camp was Eric Thomas, an Air Force veteran and commander at Post 360 on the campus of Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis. His son, Sam, was born without fingers on his right hand and has attended multiple camps for children with similar challenges. WWAST makes a deep impression on its participants.

“You can’t really put into words what they take



Children at WWAST’s softball camp learn to hit, field and catch, but even more valuable is the opportunity to spend time with others who, like them, are missing limbs – including veterans.

Photo by Lucas Carter

away from that,” Thomas says. “As a veteran – not being injured but having friends who have been – I know what that’s like, at least from a little bit of a distance. Exposing these kids to these great patriots – you can’t put into words.

“We went to D.C. and were walking along the Vietnam memorial, and there were veterans walking in the opposite direction (with) Vietnam Veteran hats on. And (Sam) is stopping and offering a hand to them and saying, ‘Thank you.’ It was very emotional to see him volunteering it like that. Other kids were doing the same thing. This kind of camp, with these people as mentors, helps bring that patriotism and understanding about the cost of freedom. I think that’s great, too.”

The Legion’s support for the WWAST camp means a great deal to Thomas. “As a Legionnaire, it makes me really proud to be involved with an organization that is so giving and so welcoming ... to know that no matter where we’re at, there’s always good fellowship to be had, and open arms and friendliness.”

For Post 177 Commander Jeff White, the Legion’s relationship with WWAST is a natural fit. “It just resonated,” he says. “The (team), that’s kind of what we’re about: trying to do things for veterans and support them any way we can.”

That support matters to Nadjadi, both as a player and a Legionnaire. “We tour the country and get to stop at all these Legion posts, and it just amazes me how people come together and really put on a great time, a good atmosphere,” he says. “It’s really awesome to be a part of (the Legion).” 🍀

Steve B. Brooks is social media manager for The American Legion.

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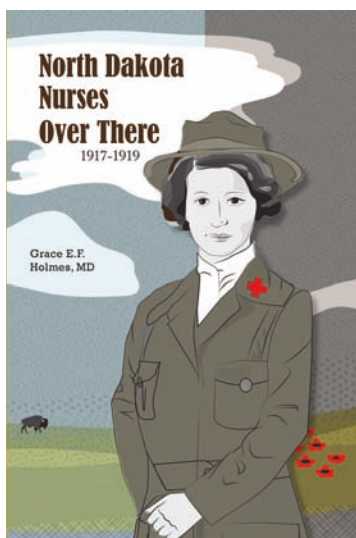


Nurses assist wounded veterans in knitting at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington. U.S. National Archives

'Goodbye and good luck'

Nurses' fear, exhaustion and sacrifice during World War I, in their own words.

BY GRACE E.F. HOLMES, M.D.



In 1934 and 1935, the Past Presidents' Parley of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of North Dakota identified and interviewed the state's 271 women who served during the Great War. Of that number, 225 were nurses. Red Cross statistics show that 20 percent of all North Dakota registered nurses served in Europe – a greater percentage than any other state during the war.

In her book "North Dakota Nurses Over There 1917-1919," Grace E.F. Holmes shares the accounts of these women, as collected by 52 American Legion Auxiliary units – when they enlisted, where they served and what their service meant to them. The following excerpts offer a glimpse into nurses' varied experiences, whether fighting the deadly Spanish flu pandemic on the homefront or caring for combat-wounded troops fresh off the battlefields of France.

COMPASSION & COMBAT

A SALUTE TO NURSES

GENE MARIE GUNDERSON, Fargo Unit

After 15 years, France seems very far away. Blue capes with scarlet linings, gray chambray uniforms, yellow shoes (often caked with mud), cold drafty barracks, the roll of drums, Old Glory whipping in the breeze, death always at one's elbow, and the thousand and one annoyances incidental to living so unnatural an existence, blur into an unreal picture. It is all like a dream that has passed

On Sept. 14, 1918, we sailed on the *Olympic*. When we were but six hours out, I was put to bed sick with the flu and remained there until I was carried off the boat when we docked in Southampton, England. I was not ever expected to reach England alive. My only food was champagne and cracked ice. We were held in quarantine for four days, then sent to Hursley Park, an English Rest Camp.

Five of our nurses died there. I saw my first military funeral. Being weak and ill, it impressed me more perhaps than it otherwise would. The soldiers could not bury our girls in the rough boxes given the men, and it was touching to see them line the crude interiors with cheese cloth ... They brought wild flowers and placed them in the dead hands that had meant to minister to them. Then covering each ugly box with the flag, they carried them to the newly made graves. As taps sounded it seemed the most melancholy but beautiful music I had ever heard

I was with Base Hospital No. 58. There were thousands of wounded, gassed, pneumonia, infectious and contagious cases. I was both day and night nurse. Here I contracted laryngitis with a touch of pleurisy and went about my work for four weeks unable to speak and with my side strapped. It was very cold in the barracks, and we crawled into our sleeping bags with our clothes on. We were so cold, tired, and half sick that we used to say that even an air raid could not get us up. We always talked this way on moonlight nights, for those were the times we feared bombing.

GERTRUDE HEALY, Grand Forks Unit

I was ordered to report to Camp Upton, Long Island, a huge evacuation camp with a large hospital, after sitting in suspense for weeks together with hundreds of other aides But our first assignment had nothing to do with physical treatment. We arrived the day before the New Year. That evening the Chief of Staff called me and said, "We have just received a bunch of mashed up aviators who are in a blue funk. They

are New York men and counted on New York hospitalization. Won't you aides go in that ward and try to cheer them up?" Trembling with uncertainty, we went to our first meeting with the badly wounded. My first patient looked like a mummy in a sarcophagus, completely encased in a plaster cast as he appeared to be. He turned out to be a nephew of former Gov. White of North Dakota. That was one of the hardest, and in a way, one of the grandest evenings I have ever spent.

JENNIE MAHONEY, Larimore, Langdon & Fargo Units

.... we nurses went by ambulance to Field Hospital No. 112, located in a shell-torn building at Château-Thierry. Their commanding officer, Maj. Hazlett, said he knew God had sent us, they needed help so badly. We had gone about 50 miles over shell-torn roads, arriving there in the evening. We worked all night and the following day in a building with windows, doors, and shell holes covered with heavy dark blankets, lest the enemy see a glimmer of light from our candles, the noise of guns and exploding bombs striking terror to our hearts, our souls sick at the sight of our boys. From 7 o'clock that evening until 7 the next morning, one thousand wounded were brought in.

ITA ROSA McDONELL, Devils Lake Unit

What a shock it was when 25 of us found our names posted for duty at Camp Mills, Long Island. The influenza epidemic had started. We found the patients in hospital tents and in the State Fair buildings. After caring for patients in the horse barns for a few days, 12 of us were sent with some of the Regular Army nurses to open up the huge new camp laundry building as part of the hospital. As fast as the corps men set up the cots and brought in the straw-stuffed ticks, we nurses made up the beds. We had quantities of linen and a good supply of hospital utensils, but no chairs or tables. The cots were low. It still makes my back ache to think of it. I believe there were nearly 5,000 cots, row on row, head to foot, a very narrow space between rows. And soon those cots were all filled Then followed a nightmare period of nights and days filled with inadequacy in the face of the devastating disease. Sometimes I think that time and its events can't be as I recall them, but the drone of a fleet of aeroplanes still brings it back with all its horror.

ANNIE M. MICKLESON, Fargo & Kindred Units

We left Fargo on Monday night and arrived at Tacoma, Wash., on Wednesday night. The next

morning we took the bus to Camp Lewis ... Arriving in the morning, as they were doing their morning's work, we went to call on one of our best nurse friends. She was giving a soldier a bath without a screen at the foot of the bed, so I said, "You must be short of screens." She answered, "You have to get used to this. I think when I get back to Fargo I can give a bath on Broadway without blushing."

DOROTHY AGNES BLODGETT, Minot Unit

I had not been in service many weeks when the Spanish flu epidemic started. It kept us all so busy that we were unable to think of anything but work. If I remember rightly, we had 80 nurses in the hospital when the epidemic started. In a short time we had 400 nurses and about 8,000 patients. Every available nurse was called into service, even student nurses from many training schools. We could not give the soldiers anywhere near the care they should have received for they came in so fast and many of them were so desperately sick. Every ward was filled to its capacity and the long corridors between were lined with cots on either side. Many of the patients lived only two or three days ... It was indeed a depressing sight to look out and see the stretchers going by from morning to night.

Since the Armistice was signed in less than three months after I entered service, I did not get overseas, but I think the nurses who worked through the epidemic in this country, and cared for the disabled veterans on their return home, did not miss many of the horrors of war.

JEAN FORREST BROWN, Fargo Unit

At Coëtquidan Camp Hospital No. 15 ... I was attached to surgery for 13 months, serving as first assistant to three different surgeons during this period. We operated on more than 1,500 major cases, and many more minor ones. Our record during this time was less than 1 percent mortality. Our part was very difficult at times; there were so many sights and heartaches. Our boys, blind, wounded, and maimed, brought to us



American Legion Post 7 in Lisbon, N.D., is named for Florence Kimball, an Army nurse who served at Base Hospital No. 22 in France. She died of pneumonia on Oct. 22, 1918, and is buried at Suresnes American Cemetery. Hortense Trautman Collection (Wisconsin Veterans Museum)

begging to die for they did not wish to go home helpless and a burden to their families or their government. Trying to encourage and uplift their morale and keep up our own, under indescribable circumstances, was not an easy task.

JANET KIPPEN, Cavalier Unit

I was stationed at Camp Grant (Rockford, Ill.) for 13 months. The flu broke out shortly after I arrived. We didn't have enough nurses. I was on night duty for six weeks in a barracks and, for a week, was alone with four corps boys to try and care for very sick men who were rushing in and falling on the floor and having to stay there until we could get to them. In six weeks, 1,100 men died in Camp Grant. The most that died in one night were 250. We also lost several nurses. When it was all over we had parties and we danced, but I really think everyone was too sad to enjoy anything very much.

SIGNE LEE, Fargo Unit

On Jan. 21, 1918, leaving Base Hospital No. 1, I was transferred to the base hospital at Camp McArthur, Waco, Texas. The country was a sandy plain and the wind blew most of the time, carrying dust through cracks and crevices into everything. In the cold weather the heat was almost non-existent. Suffering was very acute at times. The water supply was poor. The flu epidemic in the fall of 1918 can never be forgotten by any who survived. We were frequently on duty for 36 or 40 hours, if we did not drop before.

LILLIAN S. MCKNIGHT, Langdon Unit

In the morning at break of day we went on deck ... the pier was crowded with crippled soldiers on crutches. I think that was one of the saddest mornings I spent while in the Army, to see so many husky boys without arms and legs who were there to welcome the Americans. Here we said "Goodbye and good luck" to the boys and officers we met on the way over, and many we knew would never return

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Our hospital was outside the city and part of it was in an old French convent I was on night duty, surgical floor, and had 78 beds in my ward and one orderly to help me. During the thickest of the fight we had as many as five “go west” in a night and I always managed to be with each boy at the last. One thought that was always foremost in my mind was that there were mothers, wives, and sisters somewhere who would have sacrificed everything to have the privilege of being with their own boys at these times

Troops were going up the line by the thousands, and thousands were coming down wounded every day. We nurses would always try to get to the road and call, “Goodbye and good luck.” Their answer always was, “Goodbye, Sister, I’ll be back in a few days. Have a bed for me.” We hadn’t much time to give them, but tried to give each man his due. Such wonderful lads, who wouldn’t? I shall always feel I have to strive real hard to make my life as useful in the future as I did during those 19 months.

REGINA WAHL, Fargo Unit

Once when we were walking among rows of wooden crosses looking for names of someone we might know, we found the grave of Norah Emilie Anderson. I did not know her in North Dakota, but she was in Camp Custer when I was there

We now began to see what war had been like. All about was desolation. Not a tree remained nor any living thing. The ground was broken with shell holes and shell craters. The towns were great heaps of ruins. All that remained standing in them were high smoke stacks. Large piles of ammunition and machine guns, the trenches and the sandbags were in evidence.

LILLIAN JANE BLACKWELL, Cooperstown Unit

July 5, 1918: Sleep? Well, I better stuff my ears with cotton this a.m. Guns are booming in the distance. But it’s a sound we feel strangely lonesome without

July 16, 1918. What must God think when He looks down from His heaven upon this miserable struggle of mankind. Such horrible agony and suffering. Such heroism from the men!

July 28, 1918: Poor John! He was sent to help in Evacuation VII as stretcher bearer and discovered the dead patient he was about to carry out was his own brother.

July 29, 1918: Patients, patients – simply pouring in and lying all over the hillsides under the trees. They are so tired, many only slightly wounded, but

how they sleep from sheer exhaustion ... roads are lined with trucks. We had over 8,000 in eight days for our 300-bed hospital, but 1,100 in one night!

LOUESE FREEMAN, Park River Unit

It is 4 a.m., and I am hurriedly called from the nurses’ quarters to the hospital, a short distance away. Sgt. Canary was dying and calling for me I stepped to his bed and he said, “Sunshine, take my hand and raise me up.” I did, and then with the last speck of energy he said. “I’ll answer roll call elsewhere in – the – morning.” That was all.

MABEL OLETTA OLSON, Fargo Unit

The memory of memorial services at Kerhoun, France, on May 30, 1919 still lingers with me As the line of marchers proceeded to the little village along winding and narrow roads, one could look back and see, first, the nurses, the officers and the “boys” – corporals and patients. Some were just appearing over the brow of the hill; a few patients were hobbling along on crutches; others had their heads or arms still bandaged, the ambulance bringing up the rear. As we passed one house a pleasant sight greeted us. Out of one of the upstairs windows was flying our Stars and Stripes beside the French banner. At the cemetery were the people of the village to help us decorate the graves of our boys as well as their own.

JENNIE MAHONEY, Larimore, Langdon & Fargo Units

When we saw the Statue of Liberty and heard the strains of “Home, Sweet Home” from the band of the mayor’s welcoming committee, our hearts were tremulous and our eyes filled with tears and sadness for those left over there, and joy for our homeland, the very best on earth.

I feel I cannot close without a word of appreciation for the men of our Army, they were most manly, unselfish and patient. It was a real privilege to be there, for perhaps in no other way could we have learned what splendid characters our American men had. 🌿

Grace E.F. Holmes, M.D., is a professor of pediatrics and preventive medicine emerita at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She is a member of Dwight Cowles American Legion Auxiliary Unit 370 of Overland Park, Kan.

To purchase a copy of “North Dakota Nurses Over There 1917-1919,” contact the American Legion Auxiliary Department of North Dakota at (701) 253-5992 or nurses@ndala.org.



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COMPASSION & COMBAT

A SALUTE TO NURSES



Diane Carlson Evans, right, volunteered to take her nursing skills to the Vietnam War.

Photo courtesy Diane Carlson Evans

'I never even thought about giving up'

Vietnam War nurse Diane Carlson Evans comes home to face and win battles of her own, and for all women who served.

BY JEFF STOFFER

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is the second in a two-part series profiling American Legion 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee member Diane Carlson Evans, a Vietnam War combat nurse who led the effort to build a memorial honoring women veterans in Washington, D.C. She is a member of Lewis & Clark Post 2 in Helena, Mont.*

IN JANUARY 1969, 1ST LT. DIANE CARLSON is transferred to the 71st Evac Hospital at Pleiku, near the Cambodia border. "Now I am in the thick of combat. Our hospital is surrounded by concertina wire. We have four guard towers. It's very dangerous. We have sappers trying to get in. Patients were coming in so fast we called it a 'push.' A push meant mass casualties."

The 71st Evac nurses could be summoned instantly, any time of day or night, by a push. "Our hooches, where the nurses lived, were right next to the hospital. So in seconds, we could get on our boots, jungle fatigues, flak jacket and helmet when the red-alert siren went on.

"If one chopper was coming in, maybe up to eight patients, or if they really threw bodies on top of bodies, maybe 16. But, you know, one chopper was limited. Two choppers, three choppers – I used to call it a gaggle – you got tuned into the sound of those Hueys coming in, and to this day, if a Huey flew over, I would hear it from a mile away,

maybe two miles away. When a bunch of choppers came in, you knew it was trouble."

(Years later, when sculptor Glenna Goodacre designed a female figure for the Vietnam Women's Memorial looking up as if for a helicopter, "we knew exactly what it meant. For the soldiers, the Dust Off – air ambulance – helicopter meant hope. For us, it meant adrenaline-pumping work to save lives, and every minute counted.")

Every minute was spent on the edge of an emergency. "I don't think I ever really slept in Vietnam. I think I was always on the verge of sleep, waiting for that call and choppers flying."

On one particular night, the nurses' hooches rattle and tremble like the earth is quaking. This is no Huey. It's a Chinook. The nurses scramble to open a spare ward, an extra 45 beds, and begin setting up IVs. Patients start coming in, "but they are not wounded," Carlson notices. "All the wounded are in the emergency room. They're sending these sick guys to my unit. They were



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dehydrated. They were dirty. There was vomit. Wounds weren't visible, but their suffering was acute and there wouldn't be any Purple Hearts passed out for their near-death experience. All I could think about was they had been stranded out there without food, without water. Fevers. My lone corpsman and I couldn't make diagnoses. We could just get IVs started."

Deep in hostile territory, they worked by flashlight at night. "The hospital could not be lit because we got hit too often. I could start an IV in the dark, and I did."

The first lieutenant wrote her mother about that night. She had forgotten how many sick and dehydrated soldiers they treated until she rediscovered the letter in 1994. "Twenty-eight." She still has no idea what had caused their condition but remembers hooking up IVs in the dark to soldiers whose veins had collapsed.

Her hoochmate at Pleiku, also from Minnesota, was a nurse named Edie (which means "prosperous in war") and they bonded, under frequent enemy fire. One morning, they arose to find the hooch next to theirs "blown off the map. Nobody was in that hooch that night. It was unbelievable. They were all on R&R. It was like an act of God that it hit that hooch and not ours."

As rockets exploded around Diane and Edie one night, they got under their beds and, despite the situation, got the giggles like the schoolgirls they once were. "We're laughing because Edie, who always tried to keep her hair nice, had curlers in, and she had her helmet on over her head, and she is eating peanut butter and crackers. When Edie is under stress, she eats. 'If I am going to die, I am going to die happy.'"

"Our guys were putting sandbags up to the top of our hooch at daybreak, to protect us from any more incoming. We went to work the next day. Was I afraid of dying? I think by that time, I was so numb, I had resigned myself to it – that I might not come home. It was part of being there. You didn't worry about the little things like dying. We had so many casualties to take care of, we were never bored. Our patients came first."

In July 1969, 1st Lt. Carlson's tour in Vietnam ends. She doesn't want to go. "Just when we got good at what we were doing, we left. Same with the guys, the infantrymen, the soldiers. We turned it over to new people. I thought about staying another year, by re-upping, but I knew I needed to go home. I was losing weight. I was exhausted. I needed to rest."

She remembers vividly, as if it was only yesterday, her last patient in Pleiku. The most critically ill were positioned across from the nurses' station so they could keep a constant watch on them. "This patient was on a ventilator with a tracheostomy tube and couldn't speak."

To communicate, they wrote notes to each other. "I told him I was leaving. He became agitated. He didn't want me to leave. I was his nurse. He had become very attached to me. He wrote me a note that said, 'Don't leave me.' I know he was afraid. I think he knew he was going to die, and he didn't want to die alone. So, I left with great regrets, a hole in my heart, thinking not of the patients I helped to save, but only of patients I left behind."

Before leaving Vietnam, she is advised to not wear her Army uniform when she lands in the United States. Protesters can be hostile.

She wears it anyway.



“The unsung heroes are the nurses who took care of the soldiers in the Vietnam War. I was one of these soldiers. I was in the 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 1967 to 1968. We were ambushed in Tan Thanh in the Mekong Delta in April 1967. I was shot three times and seriously wounded. I was sent to Cam Ranh Bay via the 3rd Field Hospital near Saigon, and then on to Japan; from there to Valley Forge and Fort Dix, N.J., hospitals. The true heroes to me were the caring individuals who changed my dressings every day, took my pulse and temperature, changed my chest tubes and gave me medications. They helped me write letters to my parents and girlfriend, whom I married nearly 50 years ago. I can't say enough about those nurses and wish them all God's blessings.”

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Then on to Madigan Army Hospital at Fort Lewis, Wash., for an examination and discharge paperwork. She is told she has a spot on her lung and is later diagnosed with tuberculosis in both lungs and her spleen, probably the cause of her fatigue, weight loss and frequent coughing.

She travels alone, in uniform, back to Minneapolis where hecklers greet her at the airport. Two GIs are there. One throws a heckler to the ground. “It’s beyond me. That era. How our society could turn their backs on soldiers, not separating the war from the warrior.”

She rests, recovers and takes a job as a surgical nurse in Minneapolis. Three weeks later, she quits. “I was a fish out of water.” She calls Edie, who has been assigned to Madigan Army Hospital. Carlson drives to Madigan and signs on as a civilian nurse there. Within months she simply re-ups and, promoted to captain, is stationed at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, as head nurse in surgical intensive care.

“That saved my life. I needed to be taking care of soldiers again. I couldn’t relate to patients who were just having their gallbladders out and complaining about the pain.”

She falls in love with a surgical intern, Maj. Mike Evans. They marry, and when their first child is on the way, Capt. Carlson Evans retires from the Army, an expectation for pregnant soldiers.

“I wanted to stay in the Army Nurse Corps forever. I loved military nursing.”

Then, vividly, as if it was only yesterday, she returns to Vietnam.

“I didn’t know what a flashback was.”

A new mother, she goes to work part-time as a recovery room nurse at a civilian hospital in San Antonio – pretty slow work compared to Pleiku. Then, one night, the operating room nurse calls Carlson Evans in to help with an emergency surgery. “There was a small child on the operating room table. The child was hemorrhaging, and the surgeon was throwing bloody sponges at me, into the basin, for me to count. I smelled the blood. I saw the blood. And I’m right back in Vietnam. I had never heard the term ‘flashback.’ I stood



Diane Carlson Evans had difficulty adjusting to civilian nursing after the war. Photo courtesy Diane Carlson Evans

there frozen. I wasn’t functioning. And the surgeon is now swearing at me, and the operating room nurse is acting like she can’t believe that I appear to be in some kind of trance. What kind of nurse would just stand there and do nothing?

“I went home, and I started to shake. I think I shook all night. The next day, I went to human resources, and I resigned.”

NO ONE TALKED MUCH ABOUT POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS

at that time. Carlson Evans knew she had been a competent nurse in Vietnam and at Brooke Army Medical Center. “I had no idea what was happening to me.” She did not talk about it for years.

Soon, with another child on the way, the family moves to Heidelberg, Germany, where Maj. Evans becomes chief of the Army’s 130th Station Hospital. The family grows by two more as the 1970s unfold. “So now I am being a full-time mother, and I am really stuffing my Vietnam experience. The incident in that operating room was so traumatic I didn’t think I could ever go back to nursing. I had gone from being a nurse who felt very skilled and very competent to feeling that I was incompetent and couldn’t do my job.”

In 1982, she attends the dedication ceremony of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. “It was so beautiful and so meaningful – finally the nation was beginning to come to grips with our experience and looking at us as who we really were, not what their stereotypes were about us. And finding the names on the Wall that I know ... I couldn’t keep those memories away anymore. They just came. It seems like I never had a wake, never had a funeral, for all those men and women who died in Vietnam. One by one, faces would come back. Names would come back. I was grieving for each one of them.”

She estimates that 35,000 of the names on the Wall lost their lives during the time she was in-country. Eight were nurses.

In 1984, the Three Soldiers bronze statue is dedicated near the Wall, depicting three Vietnam War troops gazing back at the names of the fallen. Carlson Evans thinks to herself, “it’s a beautiful sculpture, but they forgot someone.”

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She tells her husband, “I don’t know how I’m going to do it, but something needs to be done.”

SHE APPEALS TO OTHER INTERESTED VETERANS and together they apply for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status to accept donations to build a monument to women who served in the Vietnam War. Articles of incorporation are written and outreach to other Vietnam War veterans, male and female, begins. The organization establishes a presence in Washington, D.C., and begins the long journey through federal commissions, committees, subcommittees, agencies and offices necessary to install anything permanent on the National Mall. She soon learns that to make it happen she will need a mandate from Congress.

“So, now I realize I need to go to the veterans service organizations and see if they wouldn’t support this.” The American Legion would.

A member of American Legion Post 121 in River Falls, Wis., Carlson Evans asks her fellow Legionnaires how she might get the nation’s largest veterans organization behind the idea.

“They said, ‘If you want to get anything done in The American Legion, you’d better contact Judge Dan Foley.’ Well, he was in St. Paul. He was an appellate judge, and I called him. I told him I was a veteran. That was all he needed to hear. He said, ‘Come and have lunch with me.’”

Foley, national commander of The American Legion the year Diane Carlson graduated from high school, explains that she will need a resolution passed at her post, then district and department levels. Then, he says, “‘You will come to the

national convention. That’s how you get this done.’ I did everything he said.”

In October 1985, The American Legion National Executive Committee unanimously passes Resolution 16 calling on the Department of the Interior, the Fine Arts Commission, the National Capitol Planning Commission and other agencies to dedicate an area near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial “to erect a statue honoring the women who have served during the Vietnam War.”

With national American Legion support, she writes a strategic plan, assembles a board of directors, continues raising funds and launches a publicity campaign. “My skills from Vietnam, and my nursing skills, really played a huge part in my ability to get things done. First of all, you get it done. You don’t give up. That was my mantra. In Vietnam, I never even thought about giving up. Soldiers’ lives were worth fighting for in Vietnam; now, my fellow sister veterans were worth fighting for here at home.”

It takes nearly 10 years and more than 30 hearings. “I am up at 3 in the morning writing testimony trying to convince people. And I realize why so many people are against this. They don’t know who we are. They don’t know what we accomplished because in Vietnam on the 6 o’clock news, we saw the wounded and the body bags and the soldiers, the chopper pilots and the burning villages, but we never ever saw the nurses behind the scenes or the other women who were serving in other roles. They had no clue what our contribution was, how many thousands of lives we touched, how many thousands of lives we saved.”



“As a nurse at the San Diego naval hospital from September 1968 to May 1970, it was my job to care for neurological patients who had been in Vietnam. With so many patients to care for, it was difficult to remember many of them. One stands out in my memory. He had a non-operable brain tumor and was confined to a wheelchair. At times, he was not aware of his surroundings and believed he was still fighting in Vietnam. Once, I unknowingly approached him too closely and startled him. He took a swing at me, hitting me in the stomach; after comforting him, I eventually persuaded him to take his medication. I continued caring for him until his death a few weeks later. Soon after his death, I received a written note of thanks from his family for the ‘many special nice things you did to add to Ray’s comfort.’ After caring for hundreds of patients, that was the only written note of thanks I ever received, and it was much appreciated, especially as they were parents of the only patient who ever struck me.”

Sherry (Stibal) Dunbar, Carmen, Idaho

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The Vietnam Women's Memorial was dedicated Nov. 11, 1993, on the National Mall. Media Bakery

To get their story out, she and her board and staff recruit a publicist and send press releases to every U.S. state calling on women veterans to step forward and share their stories. “That’s when the tide turned.” Thousands of news clippings, and a wave of donations, pour in. Still, opposition persists. Carlson Evans reads that the next thing you know, there will be a “movement to put a woman on Mount Rushmore” and “maybe they should paint the Statue of Liberty Day-Glo pink, or perhaps a woman should be painted into the image of George Washington crossing the Delaware.”

The lack of logic from opponents astounds her. Then the Commemorative Works Act becomes law in 1986, “making it almost impossible to put a memorial on the Mall.” Carlson Evans studies every line of the new law. “One of the statements said that it had to be of pre-eminent historical significance. So that stayed with me.”

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts disapproves of the design. “They said the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is closed. There will never be another addition.”

A proposal to install a statue on the Mall to honor the Vietnam War canine corps, at the same time Carlson Evans is fighting for the women’s monument, leads one official to publicly question where to draw the line. Evans remembers the

comparison vividly, as if it was only yesterday. “The canine corps were important and heroic, but did he just put us in the same sentence?”

Soon after that, “60 Minutes” calls. Morley Safer, who had reported in Vietnam and saw what the nurses did, interviews Carlson Evans and three other nurses. Millions see the broadcast. Phone calls, letters and telegrams of support storm in.

It comes down to one final hearing, within the Department of the Interior. It has to be unanimous. Carlson Evans prepares a 10-page speech.

“I had it in front of me, but I didn’t even look at it. I’m just going to say one thing to them: ‘Is it not of pre-eminent and lasting historical significance that women saved thousands of lives? Our wall of names would be much higher and much wider without the contribution of these very brave women.’ I sat down. The place went quiet. They took the vote. It was unanimous.”

On Veterans Day 1993, the statue depicting three uniformed women with a wounded soldier, one nurse looking skyward for a chopper, is dedicated. Thousands, including many who owed their lives to approximately 10,000 women who served in the Vietnam War, attend. The legacy of the women’s experience, cast in bronze, would be permanent.

“We stood on the shoulders of the World War II veteran women and the Korean War women,” says Carlson Evans, now a member of The American Legion’s 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee. “The World War I women – the first nurses who went into the military as nurses – they opened doors for World War II. Each generation opens doors for the next. We Vietnam veteran women certainly proved that we measured up. We were brave. We did our job under enemy fire and hostile conditions, and we didn’t quit. We never gave up on a soldier.”

And no matter what haunts them, sometimes in vivid detail, as if it was only yesterday, combat nurses and all women who have bravely served in uniform, can stand assured that they have fulfilled, above and beyond the call of duty, The American Legion’s definition of citizenship. That may, in fact, be one reason Diane Carlson Evans has kept her high school award all these years.

Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine.

Read an extended article and watch a video interview with Diane Carlson Evans online.

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Legion towns, through the lens

Four American Legion posts in rural corners of California, Nebraska, Illinois and Virginia opened their doors, hearts and histories to photographer/writer Mariah Karson beginning in 2014. It all started when Karson stopped along a country road to take a photo of a grain elevator. A Legionnaire saw her, said hello and invited her to drop by the post for prime rib that evening. She was impressed, and inspired.

Three years and thousands of miles later, "American Legion," her book of images and words, reveal the faces, feelings and textures of life in towns of 1,000 or less. Frustration and jubilation, hard work and hard luck, patriotism and camaraderie, love and tragedy are all layered to paint rural America as it really is in four unique locations. The overarching message is found on a welcome sign she photographed:

CODY WELCOMES YOU
A TOWN TOO TOUGH TO DIE

"This book combines my love of small-town America with my unique sense of patriotism," Karson writes in the introduction. "This work will increase public awareness, recognize member service and celebrate the veteran community."

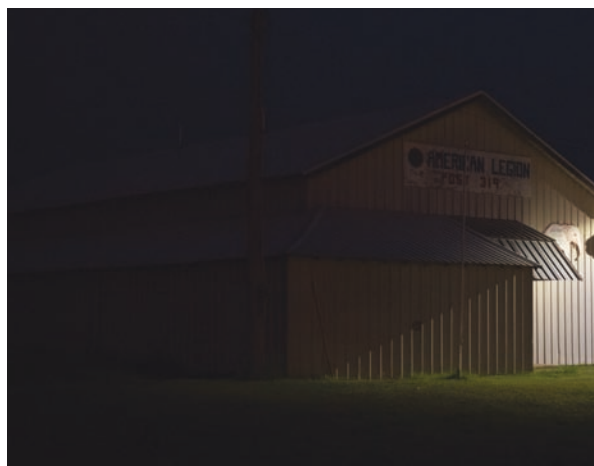
She spent two years with Franklin Grove, Ill., Post 497; Bombay, Calif., Post 801; Cheriton, Va., Post 56; and Cody, Neb., Post 319. The book is divided into sections based on each community, each opening with a satellite photo of the town and the distinct landscape on which it rests.

As she worked on the project, Karson made a discovery: her grandfather was a founding member of American Legion Post 777 in Chicago. "When I realized this lineage afforded me the privilege to join the Legion Family as an Auxiliary member, the choice was clear – it would be Auxiliary Unit 319 in the Nebraska Sandhills, one of the most beautiful places on earth."

mariahkarson.com/americanlegion



ABOVE: Larry Johnson of Cody, Neb., Post 319 shows off his decorated American Legion cap.



ABOVE: Light illuminates a flag outside Post 319 in Cody, Neb.



LEFT: Retired Maj. Douglas Goshorn rolls flags after a Fourth of July display in Cody.

RIGHT: J.D. McDowell plays pool at Post 801 in Bombay Beach, Calif.



LEFT: Rex Ingram of Post 56 holds dog tags from his military service.

RIGHT: Delbert Schafer, chaplain of Franklin Grove, Ill., Post 497, joined the Legion to support his community.



ABOVE: Jim Chapman stands outside Northampton Post 56 in Cheriton, Va.





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THE GREAT WAR 100

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

'A new kind of life'

Editor's note: Throughout the Great War's centennial, The American Legion Magazine will publish excerpts from the letters of D.B. "Bernard" Ryan of Albion, N.Y., who served as an Army infantry officer and helped found American Legion Sheret Post 35 in 1919.

309TH INFANTRY, CAMP DIX, N.J., OCT. 7, 1917

Dear Mother,

I can't believe that it is October, that your sweet peas have gone and the vines have turned brown and the shrubs have done flowering. Whatever happens I shall always carry the memory of the beauty and freshness of the place when I arrived home in August, the placidity after the days & months of anxiety and more or less strife at Madison Barracks.

This afternoon I am taking "off" although I am really "on" the job & may be sent for any minute if something comes up. Capt Segarra has gone away. I have been outside kicking about a football with some 4 or 5 officers.

The afternoon is warmer and bright but very fall like. At least it would seem so were I cross country hiking with Larry Botsford as I did 3 years ago or climbing the Palisades or strolling up Riverside Park as I did last year.

Since May I have seemed to be disassociated from former familiar incidents, pursuits and ambitions. A new kind of life. I wonder if I will ever take up with the old again. Surely I will still long for the theatre, for a good hot game of tennis, for the bustle of Times Square and the smell of grease paint, for the calm quiet of a hammock behind the vines on the porch on a still moonlight night, for the joy of the beach at Atlantic City and the calm, lonesome and gradually growing into oppressive sadness landscape from our west door. But they are all far far away.

When it is all over, I daresay I will want to get away entirely from all strife and struggle and just live somewhere in the great outdoors, a good strenuous athletic life, the life I have always desired and that has always been denied me, is denied me now even in the army, where there is such a chance for it, for I am put on paper work and feeding.

OCT. 17, 1917

I noticed an ad of the Service Flag in Lord and Taylor's space in the Times last Sunday. Also some a vendor had in Wrightstown the same day but I didn't buy from him as I would doubt the quality and the price. Some Rochester stores would have them, I should think. Why don't you get in a few to sell and have a flag pole put up at home with the Flag flying and the small service flag beneath it – one star for me?

OCT. 30, 1917

Pouring rain again since early morning but it is now reaching 11 a.m. & actually indicates a clearing. You should see this place when it rains – mud or flooded everywhere. The Q.M. trucks get stuck making deliveries of meat & produce & the trucks from Trenton or other points sometimes get here the next day.

Your Halloween cards are surely very attractive. I will put them up on the wall. They were also a surprise. I had forgotten that the day existed.

I hope you are following the daily news. The Italian defeat is received rather grimly here. As I intimated last summer, I look for the war to last for "a long long time," as the song goes. Have you heard it? "I may be gone for a long, long time."

Love, DBR

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An image shot from a remotely operated vehicle shows the hull number of USS Indianapolis. Based on the hull's curvature, it appears to be on the ship's port side. Photo courtesy Paul G. Allen

INDIANAPOLIS FOUND

Famous Navy cruiser, sunk by the Japanese in World War II, discovered in Philippine Sea.

Wreckage from USS *Indianapolis* was discovered on Aug. 18 by the expedition crew of Research Vessel (R/V) *Petrel*, which is owned by Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul G. Allen. *Indianapolis* was found 5,500 meters below the surface, resting on the floor of the North Pacific Ocean.

"To be able to honor the brave men of the USS *Indianapolis* and their families through the discovery of a ship that played such a significant role in World War II is truly humbling," Allen said. "As Americans, we all owe a debt of gratitude to the crew for their courage, persistence and sacrifice in the face of horrendous circumstances I hope everyone connected to this historic ship will feel some measure of closure at this discovery so long in coming."

The *Indianapolis* was tragically lost in the final days of World War II when it was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine July 30, 1945. The ship sank in 12 minutes, making it impossible to deploy much of its life-saving equipment. Prior to the attack, *Indianapolis* had just completed its secret mission of delivering components of one of two nuclear weapons that were dropped on Japan. Of the 1,196 sailors and Marines onboard, only 317 survived.

"Even in the worst defeats and disasters, there is valor and sacrifice that deserve to never be forgotten," said Sam Cox, director of the Naval History and Heritage Command. "They can serve as inspiration to current and future sailors enduring situations of mortal peril. There are also lessons learned, and in the case of the *Indianapolis*, lessons re-learned, that need to be preserved and passed on, so the same mistakes can be prevented, and lives saved."



U.S. Navy photo



Photo courtesy Paul G. Allen

Above, at left, the Navy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* in 1939. At right, a bell is visible among the ship's wreckage, which was discovered at a depth of more than 18,000 feet by the expedition crew of R/V *Petrel*.

"For more than two decades I've been working with the survivors. To a man, they have longed for the day when their ship would be found, solving their final mystery," said retired Capt. William Toti, spokesman for the *Indianapolis* survivors. "They all know this is now a war memorial, and are grateful for the respect and dignity that Paul Allen and his team have paid to one of the most tangible manifestations of the pain and sacrifice of our World War II veterans."

As the naval flagship of the Fifth Fleet, the sunken *Indianapolis* was the object of many previous search efforts. Allen had recently acquired and retrofitted the 250-foot R/V *Petrel* with state-of-the-art subsea equipment capable of diving to 6,000 meters (three-and-a-half miles).

The other key factor in the discovery was information that surfaced in 2016 by Richard Hulver, a historian with the Naval History and Heritage Command, which led to a new search area to the west of the original presumed position.

The *Petrel* team will continue surveying the site as weather permits, and was to conduct a live tour of the wreckage in coming weeks. *Indianapolis* remains the property of the Navy, and its location is confidential and restricted.

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BOOKS

'War had visited them in the harshest way'

The following is an excerpt from "My Life and Lens: The Story of a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent," by retired Capt. Robert Bowen, available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million and iUniverse. Bowen is a past national vice commander for The American Legion.

Feb. 26, 1967, had been a lazy sort of day. Gassaway, another correspondent, and I had played Scrabble and



Bowen, following all-night coverage of a rocket attack.

pinocle most of the afternoon and into the evening. We were still at it at 3:10 a.m. when the first explosion shattered the quiet of the night. Then another – and another, followed by sirens. The explosions were coming from the direction of the Da Nang airfield. It was under attack.

I grabbed my camera, flak jacket, .45 caliber pistol and canteen – asked Gassaway for the keys to the AP jeep, and raced off into the night.

I followed a fire truck going past the press center. It was on its way to the village of Ap Ba just outside the fence along the east side of the air base.

I entered several tin and wood huts that had been severely damaged. In one of them, a young woman lay dead in her bed. In another, a woman lay dead on the floor and two Vietnamese soldiers were removing her gold rings by candlelight. Outside, several villagers lay dead on pieces of corrugated metal roofing.

The elders stood or squatted and stared in disbelief. They had lived a relatively secure life in the shadow of the massive airfield, used by both U.S. and Vietnamese military. The war had visited them in the harshest way.

The number of rockets fired in the wee hours of Feb. 27 varied depending on who was keeping score. But the casualty figure was not disputed. Eleven airmen and one Marine were killed and 35 wounded on the airfield. Thirteen planes were damaged. Ap Ba suffered a much greater loss – 150 homes were destroyed. Thirty-five villagers were killed and 70 were wounded.

The area where the rockets were launched was known as Happy Valley. Elephant grass grew as tall as 10 feet, providing excellent cover and concealment for the enemy coming down out of the mountain. After that first 140mm rocket attack on Da Nang, Happy Valley acquired a new nickname – the Rocket Belt.

Share your memoirs, poems, photos, videos and books online at www.legion.org/mywords.

CAPITOL HILL

Senate leaders unveil new Authorization for Use of Military Force

Sens. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., and Tim Kaine, D-Va., are proposing a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) for the war on terrorism that would repeal the previous post-9/11 authorization and provide fresh congressional approval for current and future counterterrorism missions against ISIS, al-Qaida, the Taliban and other jihadist groups.

As *Defense News* reports, "Under the new bill, while the president would be able to immediately begin military action in another country against those groups, the action would stop if Congress votes to disapprove within 60 days. However, the president does not need congressional approval in countries where fighting is already happening – Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and Libya."

Flake notes that when the original AUMF was passed into law in September 2001, only 135 of the 435 current House members and only 23 of the 100 current senators were serving in Congress.



Soldiers from Bravo Company, 8th Brigade Engineer Battalion, conduct a tactical road march in South Korea. Photo by Sgt. Patrick Eakin

ACTIVE DUTY

Rotational deployments more costly

A study conducted by the U.S. Army War College concludes that Washington's post-Cold War reliance on temporary rotational deployments in Europe and South Korea actually costs more than permanent basing options. As *Stars and Stripes* reports, the study "undermines a decade-old Defense Department argument that shuttling units back and forth from the United States is a more efficient way of doing business than basing them overseas."

Citing the study "Rotational Deployments vs. Forward Stationing," *Stars and Stripes* notes that basing brigades in Europe and South Korea "would be cheaper over time, serve as a stronger demonstration of commitment to allies in the respective regions and address morale concerns ... For armored brigades, it costs about \$135 million more annually to maintain a continuous presence of soldiers on rotation from the United States to Europe."

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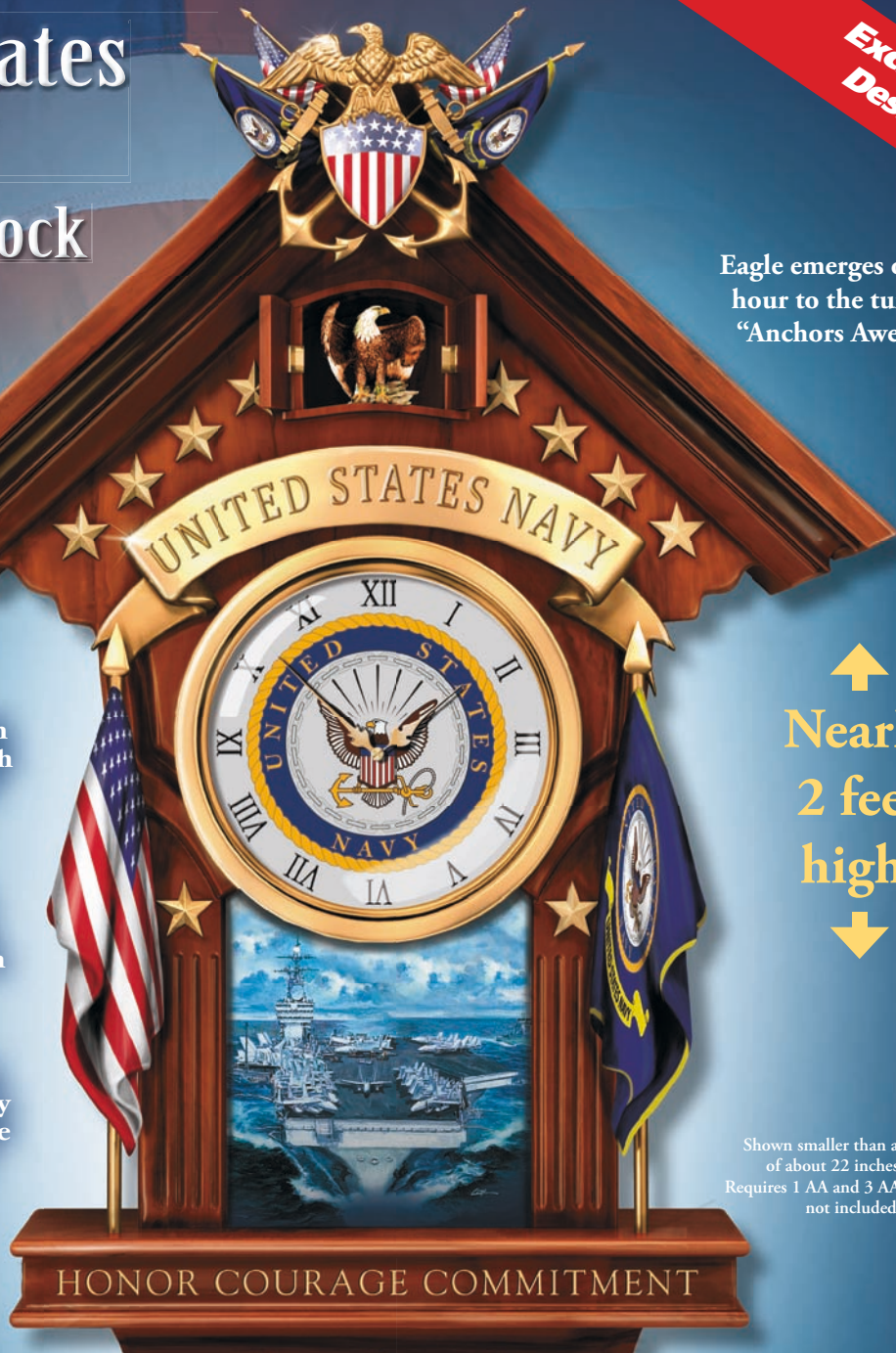
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Members of Henderson, Nev., Post 40 celebrate after a 2-1 American Legion World Series championship game win over Omaha, Neb., Post 1. Photo by Matt Roth



LEGION BASEBALL

Henderson, Nev., Post 40 claims ALWS title

Henderson, Nev., Post 40 went from expecting elimination to lifting the 2017 American Legion World Series (ALWS) trophy in just 48 hours after a 2-1 victory over Omaha, Neb., Post 1 on Aug. 15.

After a loss Aug. 13, Nevada thought it had been eliminated, but through a tiebreaker Post 40 advanced. A semifinal win over Bryant, Ark., Post 298 the next day sent the team to the final, where Henderson faced a familiar foe.

A rematch of the tournament's Game 2 proved to be a lot more competitive than the original meeting, where Nebraska slashed 21 hits, one shy of the ALWS record, in a 9-1 rout. It also became the first team in ALWS history with four players each with four or more hits.

The same starter for Nebraska in that game, Joshua Culliver, took the hill after a sparkling seven innings of two-hit ball Aug. 10 against Nevada. Shane Spencer, just 16, got the call for Nevada. Spencer was coming off his own seven-inning gem, allowing only one hit against Shrewsbury, Mass., Post 397. The teams remained on level pegging until the sixth inning, when Henderson's J.J. Smith singled, stole second and advanced to third on a wild pitch. Nick Thompson did his job to bring in the runner with a sacrifice fly to give the designated visitors the lead.



Dylan Phillips of Omaha, Neb., Post 1 hits a sacrifice fly to score the team's sole run. Photo by Matt Roth

Spencer, who was locked in on the mound, ended the game with more stellar pitching, finishing with a line of seven innings pitched, three hits and only one run allowed. For his work on the hill, he was named the 2017 George W. Rulon Player of the Year.

"It took a couple innings to settle in because I have never been in this atmosphere before," Spencer said. "I wasn't expecting these awards as a pitcher. It is a great feeling. I've never been on this big of a stage before. I hope I'm here again next year."

— Jeremy Field



American Legion Baseball not only breeds great ball players, but it shows young men how to compete while respecting the game and country. We learned life lessons and how to come together as a team and play for a common cause.

Frank Vaccaro Jr., assistant and third-base coach for Shrewsbury, Mass., Post 397, which won ALB's Northeast Regional tournament against Midland, Mich., to earn its first appearance in the ALWS. In a tweet, Vaccaro said his team made "memories no one can take away."

POSTSEASON AWARD WINNERS

George W. Rulon American Legion Player of the Year
Shane Spencer, Henderson, Nev.

American Legion Baseball Big Stick Award
Jack Thomas Wold, Henderson, Nev. (29 total bases)

American Legion Baseball Slugger Award
Jordan Patty, Midland, Mich. (.529 batting average)

Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI Award
Zack Luckey, Omaha, Neb. (13 RBIs)

Bob Feller Pitching Award
Jordan Patty, Midland, Mich. (19 strikeouts)

James F. Daniel Jr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award
Will Hanafan, Omaha, Neb.

Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award
Henderson, Nev., coaching staff

ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM

Each player receives a \$2,500 scholarship; the overall top academic player is named team captain and receives a \$5,000 scholarship. The annual All-Academic Team is sponsored by Diamond Sports, a leading manufacturer in baseball merchandise and the official baseball used in ALB national tournaments.

Trace Henry, Tupelo, Miss., Post 49 (team captain)

Luke Johnson, East Haddam, Conn., Post 156

Antonio Balducci, Mechanicsville, Va., Post 175

Jackson Graham, Wilmington, N.C., Post 10

Austin Dill, Cape Girardeau, Mo., Post 63

Anthony Ebensperger, Plum City, Wis., Post 365

Chase Konert, Alma, Neb., Post 118

Jarett Hamby, Rock Springs, Wyo., Post 24

Marcus Alexander, Warwick, R.I., Post 43

SERVICE

Open your post home for Veterans Day dinner

National Commander Denise Rohan is asking American Legion posts nationwide to host "the mother of all Veterans Day dinners" Nov. 11, inviting their communities in for food and fellowship.

"Many posts already conduct Veterans Day parades and observances," Rohan says. "Make them even bigger by adding a buffet. Let's add seats at our tables for the people our organization's Four Pillars are intended to serve."

She encourages posts to reach out to local military installations, reserve centers and National Guard units, as well as veterans and their families who aren't part of the Legion Family but who would enjoy "a nice home-cooked meal and the company of caring people." Invite participants and alumni of Legion youth programs, as well as churches, charitable organizations and businesses.

Noting that there's no one way to do it, Rohan says dinners could double as fundraisers for Temporary Financial Assistance and service officer programs. Posts, units and squadrons might seek corporate sponsorship to help cover the costs.

"Whatever the case, think of it as a service," she says. "Don't set prices too high for people on fixed budgets to attend, and consider free meals for the homeless or deep discounts for those who have fallen on hard times."

Include local media in event planning, too. By promoting Veterans Day dinners online and through social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the entire Legion Family benefits from a magnified message. During and after their event, members are encouraged to post photos and stories on social media with the hashtag **#legionfamilydinner**. They can also post photos and stories at www.legiontown.org.

"At first, visitors may see us serve meals," Rohan says. "Once they get to know us, they will see how we serve America."



PERSONAL FINANCE



Create a windfall for your post, and plan for your own

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

I'm excited about USAA's Salute Your Post giveaway. All you do is sign on or register for USAA membership at www.usaa.com/talgiveaway between now and Oct. 31 to give your American Legion post a shot at securing a \$20,000 windfall.

The winner's post (not the winner) gets the money. I'm sure most posts have a long to-do list and wouldn't

find it hard to put the money to good use.

When it comes to your own finances, a windfall could come in the form of an inheritance, a gift, a lottery win or even a tax refund. No matter how it comes, it can provide a chance to do some financial good.

The key is to have a plan on how you're going to deploy the money to accomplish your goals. Admittedly, I recall at least one time in my life that I frittered away a pretty big windfall. A little of this, a little of that, and before I knew it the money was gone and I had a lot less to show for it than I would have liked.

Here are a few ideas for your next windfall:

■ **Pay down debt.** If you have any high-interest consumer debt, why not get rid of some or all of it? It'll save you a lot of wasted interest and could relieve a lot of stress. But you may not want to use the entire windfall to trim your debt, because my second idea is central to avoiding debt in the future.

■ **Build an emergency fund.** If you don't have the old cash stash of three to six months' worth of committed expenses set aside as an emergency fund, a windfall provides the opportunity to start building. Otherwise, the next time you get hit with a financial surprise you may have to turn to a credit card, sell some possessions, or even borrow from friends or family.

■ **Save for retirement.** Will your windfall be the engine that single-handedly funds your golden years? Unless it's a lottery win, probably not. However, your windfall could be the spark that gets you consistently putting money away in an IRA, Roth IRA or employer plan. It could be a boost as you sprint to the finish line that is retirement or bolster what you already have. Use your windfall to get – and keep – the retirement ball rolling.

■ **Purposeful saving.** You already know they're coming: new tires, a new roof, holiday gifts or maybe even a blow-the-doors-off vacation. Get a head start by placing a portion of your unexpected money into a savings account to help foot the bill.

Plan for your next windfall, and sign up for the Salute Your Post giveaway so your post has a chance to do the same.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinance

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MY GI BILL

VETERANS & EDUCATION
BY VALERIE HEFFNER

Q: *I am enrolled in a community college and using my Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. Unfortunately, I had a rough time last semester due to an illness, so I received a C in my chemistry class. If I am using my GI Bill benefits, is it possible to repeat the course?*

A: According to VA, if you receive a passing grade and the course is

successfully completed according to your school, VA will not pay for you to repeat the course. For example, if you are required to get a B in chemistry, you may repeat the course. But if you choose to repeat the course just to bring up your grade, VA will not pay for it.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. askvalerie@legion.org

VERBATIM

“It's like nothing else you will ever see or do. It can be religious. It makes you feel insignificant, like you're just a speck in the whole scheme of things.”

Mike O'Leary of San Diego, who photographed the Aug. 21 solar eclipse along with hundreds of other amateur astronomers in Casper, Wyo. The event was the first full solar eclipse to sweep the United States coast to coast in nearly a century.



Past National Commander Bob Turner, center, leads Boys Nation senators in song. Turner retired in July after 35 years on the program's staff. Photo by Clay Lomneth

YOUTH PROGRAMS

American Legion Boys Nation brings together 'best of the best'

The 71st session of American Legion Boys Nation in July featured lots of new faces – and a goodbye to a familiar one.

Ninety-eight delegates from 49 states spent a week at Marymount University in Arlington, Va., where program director Mike Buss congratulated them on their selection. "The key word here is opportunity," he said. "The American Legion is providing you with that What you do with it is up to you."

Throughout the week, the young senators visited the World War II, Vietnam and Lincoln memorials, and laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. With their counterparts from American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation, they also met President Trump at the White House and their senators and representatives on Capitol Hill. Guest speakers included C-SPAN marketing specialists, Jeff Kendrick of the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, and Holocaust survivor Nesse Godin.

Darius Thomas of Alabama was elected president, and Jay Blackburn of Tennessee vice president. "To know they're the best of the best and they elected me to represent them, it just humbles me," Thomas said of his fellow delegates.

This year marked the last for Past National Commander Bob Turner as part of the Boys Nation staff, after 35 years as a volunteer. He was a delegate from Georgia Boys State as a youth.

"It got in my blood," said Turner, who began as a section counselor and moved up to director of activities in the 1990s. "In some small way, I felt I was helping develop the youth in our country."

Filling Turner's shoes will be Past National Commander Dale Barnett of Georgia. Still, Boys Nation won't be the same without the man who's helped shape the program for nearly half of its 71 years.

"He is Boys Nation," Buss said. "Always will be."

www.legion.org/boysnation



American Legion Boys Nation delegates prepare to raise the flag. Photo by Lucas Carter

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CAREERS

Three important trends in writing cover letters

How we read has changed remarkably due, in large part, to the Internet. We tweet 140 characters and text short

messages with numerous abbreviations and shortcuts. We read blog posts and quickly skim online communications.

That trend has affected how we write (and read) job search communications. The long and detailed cover letter has been replaced by the more modern, shorter and easier-to-read e-note. Here's what you need to know to create powerful e-notes that will get you noticed and not passed over.

TODAY'S COVER LETTERS ARE E-NOTES

When was the last time you printed and mailed a letter and résumé in response to a job? If you're like most, the answer is "never" or "not in a very long time."

Today, you're most likely uploading your letters for online postings or sending them via email. That means your letters should be formatted as e-notes (email messages) and not traditional letters. E-notes:

- Don't start with a bland sentence announcing that you're applying for a particular job. Use the subject line for that.
- Must immediately capture attention – no leisurely introductions. Remember that most of your message may be hidden, if viewed on a phone, so give readers a reason to scroll down to learn more.
- Have a get-to-the point style with short paragraphs and/or bullet points.
- Include a signature at the bottom with contact information (phone, email, LinkedIn profile).

LETTERS ADD VALUE TO ONLINE APPLICATIONS

When an application indicates that a cover letter is optional, should you or shouldn't you take the time and trouble to include one? In a word, yes: a short letter in the style of an e-note. When employers screen résumés to choose candidates to interview, a lot of the content of those résumés can be similar. When you include a letter with your résumé, you can share additional information, emphasize aspects of your background that fit particularly well, and create a connection with each job and company.

GOOD WRITING, CORRECT SPELLING AND GRAMMAR NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE

Yes, your cover letter is a less-formal e-note or an uploaded file. But that doesn't mean it can be sloppily written, use texting shortcuts, or have language or spelling errors.

Employers judge candidates on the quality of the documents they submit in job applications. These are indicative of the quality of work you will do for that employer if you are hired. Be certain your letters and e-notes are as perfect as your résumé.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Modernize Your Résumé: Get Noticed ... Get Hired" and "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions."



Photo courtesy Laura Leger

CENTENNIAL

Post 133, Carlisle, Ark.

One of Rollie Crowder Post 133's most treasured possessions is an old post flag purchased around 1943, when the post was renamed for a local Marine. Rollie Crowder was killed Aug. 7, 1942, in the assault at Tulagi in the Solomon Islands. Originally chartered in 1920, the post also has an honor ribbon from 1951.

SHARE YOUR POST'S LEGACY

Upload stories, photos and videos of your post's history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration website.

www.legion.org/centennial

ACTIVE DUTY

'Katrina girl' plans to join military

Nearly 12 years after Air Force Master Sgt. Mike Maroney rescued 3-year-old LaShay Brown from rising waters caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, she plans to join the military, *The Washington Post* reports.

Maroney was part of a pararescue team that saved dozens of people after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. A photo of the two appeared on the cover of *People* magazine.

Citing an interview with *Air Force Times*, the *Post* reports that the photo brought Maroney peace during deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

He reconnected with Brown years after Katrina, and was her date at the Junior ROTC Bay High School military ball.



U.S. Air Force photo

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

354th FW, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/27-29, Steven McCarthy, (704) 953-1879, steven.mccarthy@yahoo.com; **454th Bomb Wing**, Columbus, MS, 4/21-23, Tom Warnock, (315) 427-6371, integrals@aol.com

ARMY

39th Eng Bn Cbt, Herndon, VA, 11/9-12, Bill Ray, (817) 239-0787, bill39th@sbcglobal.net; **76th ASA SOU (Taipei, Taiwan)**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/8-11, Allan Rubin, (248) 514-4460, amrubin@comcast.net; **192nd Assault Helicopter Co & Attached Units**, Fort Walton Beach, 10/12-15, Edward Michaud, (203) 377-7920, emich192@yahoo.com; **720th MP**, Washington, 5/25-29, Jim Ahlfeld, (914) 844-5244; **Army Counter Intelligence Corps Veterans (ACICV)**, Springfield, MA, 4/20-23, Stan Solin, (714) 998-1562, agentreport@gmail.com; **Mil Assistance Cmd Vietnam (MACV) Advisers**, Pensacola, FL, 4/11-15, Lewis Grissaffi, (619) 922-8682, luisaffi@yahoo.com; **Nat'l Counter Intelligence Corps Assn**, South Padre Island, TX, 10/12-15, Jerry Burns, (423) 791-3115, gbcnica@gmail.com

JOINT

All Former Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia Advisers - Counterparts, Pensacola, FL, 4/11-15, Lewis Grissaffi, (619) 922-8682, luisaffi@yahoo.com

MARINES

2nd Bn 4th Mar - Battle of Dai Do 50th Anniv, Quantico, VA, 4/30-5/3, Frank Valdez, (714) 306-2329, fxala@hotmail.com

NAVY

Conserver ARS 39, Jacksonville, FL, 4/26-29, Kevin Weaver, (610) 780-5484, kcwrdc@yahoo.com; **Dubuque LPD 8**, Evansville, IN, 6/23, Jeff Smith, jeffsmith689@gmail.com; **Harlan R. Dickson DD 708**, Norfolk, VA, 10/1-5, Carl Ioveino, (203) 376-8744, linci157_dd708@att.net; **John F. Kennedy CV/CVA 67**, Norfolk, VA, 8/23-26, Bob Haner, (407) 682-2613, bobngahaner@yahoo.com; **Kenneth D. Bailey DD/DDR 713**, Pensacola, FL, 5/3-6, Ernie Pina, (401) 333-1964, cpolina@cox.net; **Moale DD 693**, North Myrtle Beach, SC, 4/22-25, Bryan Wentz, (908) 537-4104, razznnotail@comcast.net; **Power DD 839**, Portland, ME, 6/24-28, John Pinto, (352) 527-2352, jpinto839@gmail.com; **Sailfish SS/SSR 572**, Branson, MO, 4/13-15, Ron Bowlin, (406) 600-0953, rsbowlin@3rivers.net; **San Marcos LSD 25**, Philadelphia, 5/4-6, Jack Lieberman, (215) 287-4311, jacklieberman8104@comcast.net; **Vreeland DE/FF 1068**, Branson, MO, 4/26-29, Gilbert Douglas III, (205) 222-7664, ke4nrl@gmail.com; **Yorktown CG 48**, Knoxville, TN, 7/5-8, Craig Mass, (703) 772-9124, ussyorktowncg48association@gmail.com

IN SEARCH OF

1st Mil Intel Det 1st Inf Div (Vietnam, 1966-1967), Jerry Burns, (423) 753-2296, gbcnica@gmail.com

228th Ord Det (Fort Lee, VA, 1963-1964), Leonard Kaner, (607) 738-4682, len.kaner@yahoo.com

591st Engr Co (Vietnam, 1966-1972 & Sappers 2007-2014), Ken Kiel, (414) 529-7731, kcconst@wi.rr.com

595th Engr Co (Vietnam, 1966-1970), Ken Kiel, (414) 529-7731, kcconst@wi.rr.com

A Co 1/10th Inf 4th Div (Fort Carson, CO, 1975-1979), Frank Quinones, (760) 617-3361, frankquinon88@gmail.com

A Co 2nd 60th 9th Inf (Tan Tru, Vietnam, 1968), "Skitch," Jim "Molch" Molchan, (610) 799-5595, iampatriot68@gmail.com

A Co 2nd Bn 8th Cav (An Khe, Vietnam, 1966-1967), Larry Brager, (408) 337-1948, sbrager@att.net

CID 2nd Inf Div (Korea, 1965-1966), Harry Fried, (610) 751-0154, harryfried1@hotmail.com

Provost Marshall Gen Ctr MP Marching Band (Korea), Fort Gordon, GA, Stanley Husted, (330) 828-2477

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Post 291, IA: Ralph Chinn, Loren Hansen, Claude Phillips, Ralph R. Spaulding

Post 1, ME: Charles E. Millett

Post 129, NJ: Jim Cressen

Post 36, Puerto Rico: Jose A. Velez

TAPS

Clenoa L. Anthony, Dept. of Louisiana. Nat'l Cemetery Cmte. Memb. 2004-2017.

David A. Korth, Dept. of Wisconsin. Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 2007-2008, Dept. Cmdr. 1994-1995, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1998-2000, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Chmn. 2004-2007, Nat'l Employment Cmte. 1994-1995 and 2008-2013, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 2000-2004, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Memb. 1998-2000, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Chmn. 1995-1997, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Chmn. 2001-2004, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2000-2001, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1987-1994 and Nat'l Resolutions Subcmte. Memb. 2001-2004.

Robert D. Shalala, Dept. of Pennsylvania. Dept. Cmdr. 1992-1993, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2008-2009, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1993-1997 and 1998-2003, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2009-2013 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 2013-2017.

Patrick D. Smith, Dept. of Michigan. Nat'l Merchant Marine Cmte. Memb. 1968-1970 and 1972-1974, and Nat'l Merchant Marine Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1970-1972.

Raymond B. Tanner Sr., Dept. of New York. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1977-2013 and Nat'l Veterans Employment & Education Cncl. 2013-2017.



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A JUDGE asked a defendant, “Why did you steal the car?”

“I had to get to work,” the defendant replied.

“Why didn’t you take the bus?”

“I don’t have a driver’s license for the bus.”

DID YOU EVER notice that when you put the two words “The” and “IRS” together they spell “THEIRS”?

THE OPTIMIST believes the glass is half full. The pessimist believes it is half empty. The mother just wants to know why you didn’t use a coaster.

A SALESMAN reported to his manager that he had gotten two orders that day: one to get out, and the other to stay out.

NOT ALL math puns are bad. Just sum.

A TEACHER said to her class, “We can learn a lot from ants. Ants work very hard all the time. And what happens to them in the end?”

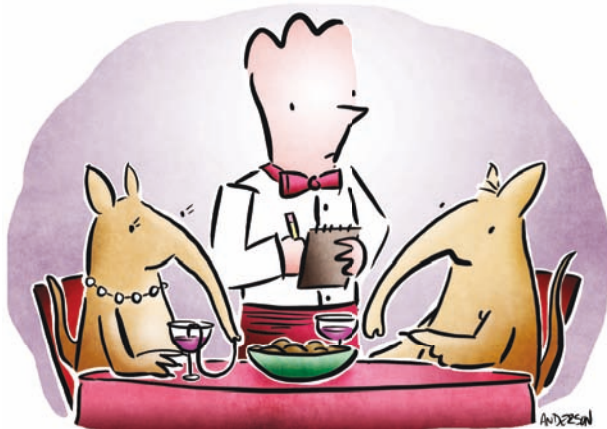
A student answered, “They get stepped on.”

MY WIFE told me I had to stop acting like a flamingo. So I had to put my foot down.

WHAT HAIR COLOR do they put on the driver’s licenses of bald men?

A LITTLE GIRL asked her father, “Daddy, do all fairy tales begin with ‘Once upon a time’?”

He replied, “No, there’s a whole series of fairy tales that begin with ‘If elected, I promise’”



“We’ll both have the anthill.”



“Dude, I never said I wanted to work. I just said I wanted a job.”



“Look, Mom! They ran out of trick-or-treat candy, so they gave me these kittens!”

THE FIRST MATE on a ship got drunk for the first time in his life. The captain, a stern man, recorded in the log, “The first mate got drunk today.”

The mate protested the entry, explaining that if it remained in the log without further explanation, it could ruin his career by suggesting drunkenness was not unusual for him. The captain said the log recorded the truth and must stand as written.

The next week, it was the first mate’s turn to write the ship’s log. And every day he wrote, “The captain was sober today.”

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